

# PARKS AND PATHWAYS



*Park and Open Space Master Plan  
Wichita-Sedgwick County, Kansas*

September, 1996



# **PARKS AND PATHWAYS**

## **Park and Open Space Master Plan Wichita-Sedgwick County, Kansas**

Prepared as an Element of the  
Wichita Sedgwick County Comprehensive Plan

by

Land Use/Research Division  
Metropolitan Area Planning Department

and

Wichita Park and Recreation Department

for

Sedgwick County Board of Commissioners

Wichita City Council

Wichita Board of Park Commissioners

Wichita-Sedgwick County Metropolitan Area Planning Commission

**SEPTEMBER, 1996**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

With growth comes a need to provide (and enhance where needed) public services, including adequate and well maintained parks and recreation programs. These services are a basic component of the "bundle of services" provided by local government. This plan presents a vision for a county-wide park, open space and pathway system spanning the next 15 years to the Year 2010.

Expectations are that the Wichita-Sedgwick County metropolitan area is to have a slow, but steady growth scenario for the next 15-20 years. Between 1990 and 2010, Sedgwick County's population is projected to increase by about 57,000 to 460,866. Of this increase, 70-75% of the people will reside in Wichita (41,000). Not only will all these new residents benefit from this plan and the follow-up implementation strategies, but so will those currently residing in Wichita and other areas of the county.

To meet current and future needs, the plan uses land and facility (equipment) standards. For Wichita, a standard of 15 acres of land per 1,000 residents is recommended. This standard includes playgrounds, neighborhood, community and regional parks, and open **space/pathways**. This translates to a Year 2010 need of 1,050 acres for playgrounds, neighborhood and community parks. Approximately 400 acres of pathways and open space are also recommended over the next 15 years.

In anticipation of future growth, "Parks and Pathways, the Park and Open Space Master Plan," has been prepared for use, primarily, by the **Wichita Park and Recreation Department** in its daily decision-making capacity. However, the plan also includes strategies for action on a county-wide level.

The plan cites future needs for land equivalent to some 40 neighborhood parks, along with several community parks. In the unincorporated areas, just outside of Wichita, three new large (regional) parks are recommended. For unincorporated Sedgwick County and the small cities, the timing and extent of park development are left to the governing bodies' discretion.

To meet present needs, the plan relies on the 1992 survey of Wichita citizens, on public input given at past and ongoing public meetings (including CPO meetings), and on the input provided by a variety of citizen and business groups.

Feedback on the discussion draft of the plan called for a greater emphasis on taking care of the recreation facilities and parks that currently exist. In response, the plan has elevated maintenance and security to high priority status.

Two important areas that have been cited for further scrutiny are financing and a more refined park service area analysis. Funding is recognized as being crucial to the plan. A variety of tools available to raise the needed dollars is found in the plan. The next step is to pare these down to realistic options and to define the appropriate mix of revenues for Wichita-Sedgwick County. Thus, planning commissioners and Park Board members will follow up the plan by working to complete a financial strategy to supplement the plan.

The costs to acquire, develop, and maintain the new parks is estimated at \$53 million. However, this figure is based on an average of land acquisition and development costs for existing parks in Wichita. Since each park can be developed with any number of options, this total for new costs could vary a great deal more or less than \$53 million. The \$53 million is not to be considered a fixed budget. The intention is to have projects submitted as individual capital projects for approval over the next 15 years -- not to raise one lump sum of funds to pay for park improvements at one time.

To reduce costs further, a recommendation is made for an analysis of school sites and private parks to alleviate some of the future land needs. Criteria to include some private facilities are being developed; school use agreements have been used before, but will be expanded to offer more recreational outlets. Work is already underway to utilize public-private partnerships with developers of new subdivisions as a means to establish neighborhood-type parks in the county's growth areas.

The plan contains 6 major goals and 71 recommended strategies to accompany the goals. The plan also recommends 4 basic, but necessary, actions for successful implementation.

1. Establish new service standards. In addition to the land acreage standard, this includes new standards for improved maintenance and security. Private open space in new subdivisions may also substitute for some of the public open space needs.

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2. Develop new revenue sources. When completed, the recommended **financial** strategy will aid local officials on the best course of action for raising funds.

3. Expand the County's role in providing parks. With the current activity in far west Wichita, the Four Mile Creek area and growth in the Derby-Haysville areas, three new region-sewing parks are recommended to

serve these areas. The County could play an important role in one or more of these parks.

4. Create a pathway and open space system to complement the park system. Pathways will provide the links between existing parks and activity areas; and open space (whether public or private) will add to the attractiveness of the metropolitan area.



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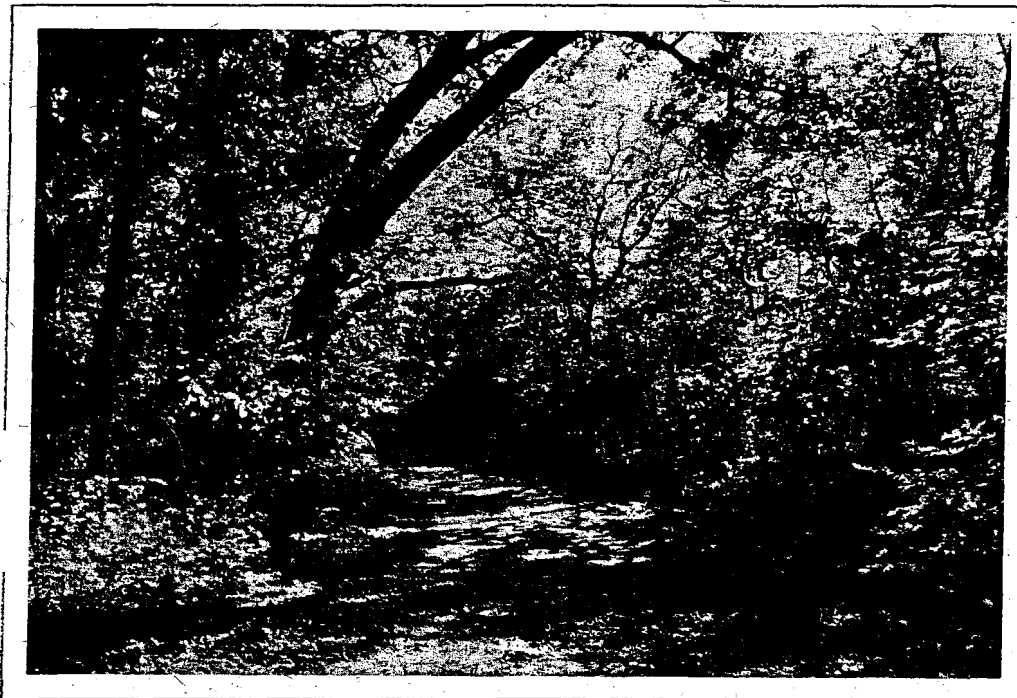
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# INTRODUCTION

*A park (public) is a tract of land owned by the public and used for play and recreation or left natural and undeveloped for enjoyment by all.*

*Open space is land that has not been built on; land left open to the sky.*





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# INTRODUCTION TO THE PLAN

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## PLAN PURPOSE AND GOAL

The purpose of this planning document is to update the 1978 Wichita-Sedgwick County Park and Open Space Plan. In light of recent studies and plans, city and county capital improvement programs, and anticipated development and demographic trends, it is time to take another look at what has happened and what can be expected for future parks. Parks and Pathways is intended to identify a strategic method for acquiring and developing public park land in the future, as well as make recommendations that can accomplish our future vision in an economical and efficient manner. While the recommendations found in this plan may seem bold when compared to previous park planning efforts, the many concepts behind this plan have been discussed in some form or another in Wichita-Sedgwick County over the past seventy years. Some, simply have not been brought to fruition. Other recommendations are based upon innovative and progressive programs currently used in metropolitan areas comparable to Sedgwick County. These are communities which Wichita and Sedgwick County compete with on a regular basis for new business and employment opportunities. Places such as Boulder, Colorado, Lincoln, Nebraska, Overland Park, Kansas, Olathe, Kansas, as well as Johnson County, Kansas have successfully implemented progressive park planning and urban design strategies to enhance their region's quality of life. Wichita and Sedgwick County should do the same.

Parks and Pathways focuses upon the physical aspects of park facilities, park land, and community open spaces in Wichita and the unincorporated areas of Sedgwick County. This plan seeks to incorporate recommendations from the 1993 Wichita-Sedgwick County Comprehensive Plan and the 1990 Strategic Agenda for Wichita. With the adoption of this plan, the small cities in Sedgwick County should be strongly encouraged to coordinate park development and maintenance efforts with both Wichita and Sedgwick County.

Parks and Pathways reflects important social and economic trends of the current times. Also, financial considerations and limitations are prominent in the development and implementation of this Plan. Significant effort is currently devoted toward providing social programs to the community, particularly child related activities. However, many issues and programs are beyond the scope of this physical park land and facilities plan, and local park departments should continue to focus on establishing the best programs possible for their citizens.

The intent of this plan is to outline future actions which will:

- \*Enhance park and recreational opportunities for citizens of Wichita and Sedgwick County;

- \*Improve service in response to changes in community needs;

- \*Increase citizen support for park and recreation services;

- \*Increase use of citizen input and facility usage surveys in park and recreation decisions, and;

- \*Promote the value of open spaces for recreation, visual purposes, flood control, and property value enhancement.

The remainder of this document is divided into three primary sections. Section 2 begins with an examination of the history of park planning and the recreation movement in order to gain an understanding of the ideology of park development. This perspective provides **THE FOUNDATION** from which our local park planning originated, and why certain courses of action were chosen for park planning in the future. Next, Wichita and Sedgwick County's demographic trends are presented to provide a basic understanding as to where we are now as a community. Based on knowledge of current demographic trends in the metropolitan area, the Plan also includes projections for where Wichita and Sedgwick County are headed by the year 2010. The final part of Section 2 analyzes Wichita and Sedgwick County's existing park and recreation systems. Considerations are also given to current budget and capital improvement expenditures for park related development and recreation facilities.

Section 3 focuses upon **THE NEEDS** in Wichita and Sedgwick County's park and open space system. Many changes have occurred within the community since the last master plan was adopted in 1978. This section analyzes our park and facility needs by two methods; first by applying national, regional, and local standards to determine the number of required facilities needed to serve our existing and future populations; and second, by analyzing community demand for park related services as determined by a local citizen survey.

The final part of this plan, Section 4, presents the vision for **THE FUTURE**. This section is intended to

## INTRODUCTION TO THE PLAN

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set priorities for meeting the region's future park needs. Alternative revenue and funding enhancements are recommended for investigation as well as organizational approaches for future park management. Also outlined are recommended courses of action to meet citizen needs and accomplish the vision.

With this Plan, we strive to not only enhance our quality of life but to strengthen the aesthetic image of our open spaces; qualities that are so **often** considered by businesses in determining new company locations and expansion opportunities. This document refers to open space in the sense of the public environment and the land that is directly owned, controlled, and maintained by the public at-large. Most of that land is in the form of street rights-of-way; other areas held for parks and recreation, for drainage, and for various community facilities-libraries, fire stations, maintenance yards, etc. The quality of public buildings; maintenance of parks; the care with which public streets are decorated with signs, lights, poles and wires - these are all expressions of the pride and well-being of the community.

Furthermore, maintaining and enhancing quality of life is increasingly perceived to have a direct economic payoff. Business and industry are less restricted in their locational requirements in the "post-industrial" society. Their directors and executives give increasing weight to the quality of life that communities offer in deciding whether or not to expand or relocate facilities. The visual and other sensual qualities of a community provide immediate, tangible, and everyday expressions of how seriously committed the community is to maintaining and enhancing its overall quality of life.

As the largest metropolitan area in the State of Kansas, Sedgwick County and its municipalities should be the state's leader in implementing and pursuing innovative park planning strategies. In order to be successful in an increasingly competitive economy, it will be critical that we follow an aggressive plan for meeting our future park and open space needs. Parks and Pathways places a distinct emphasis upon **enhancing the** park and open space system, thus making the region a more attractive place in which to live and positioning Sedgwick County for a strong economic future.

### NATIONAL PARK AND RECREATION TRENDS

In 1985 President Reagan created the President's Commission on Americans Outdoors to **formulate** recommendations for policies and programs to assure ad-

equate outdoor recreation opportunities for Americans into the next century. The 16 member Commission included members of the U.S. Congress and Senate, State Governors, National and State park and recreation departments, and business leaders including Sheldon Coleman, Chairman of the Board for the Coleman Company of Wichita. The goals of the Commission were to determine what outdoor recreation means to the American people, and to recommend ways to ensure that governments, communities, and individual actions reflect the values that citizens attach to recreational activities.

The Commission found that nearly 50 percent of Americans describe themselves as "outdoors people", and another 16 percent consider themselves a combination of indoors and out. Listed below are the key findings that the Commission learned and reported to the President from surveys and public hearings throughout the United States:

- **Americans place a high value on the outdoors; it is central to the quality of our lives and the quality of our communities.**

- **Outdoor recreation provides significant social, economic, and environmental benefits. Because these benefits are difficult to assess in dollars, recreation and resources protection suffer in competition with other programs for public and private dollars.**

- **High quality resources — land, water, and air — are essential to fishing and boating, camping and hiking, skiing and bicycling, hunting horseback riding, and every other outdoors activity.**

- **Quality of the outdoor estate remains precarious. People continue to misuse and abuse resources and facilities. We are becoming aware of more pervasive long-term threats such as toxic chemicals, water pollution from non-point sources, groundwater contamination, and acid precipitation.**

- **We are losing available open space on the fringe of fast-growing urban areas and near water.**

- **Wetlands and wildlife are disappearing.**

- **Wild and free-flowing rivers are being dammed, while residential and commercial development is cutting off public access to rivers in urban areas.**

- **With more people doing many different things outdoors, competition for available lands and waters is in-**



## INTRODUCTION TO THE PLAN

creasing; to accommodate these pressures we will have to better manage what we have.

- The** quality of recreation services delivery is inadequate. Though some services are improving, much remains to be done.

- Inadequate** funding for staff, development of facilities, and maintenance limits recreation use of some public lands.

- People in central cities have a harder time **experiencing** the outdoors.

- Barriers to investment prevent the private sector from reaching its potential as a recreation provider.

- Resources management and recreation programs offered by public and private providers are not coordinated as **well** as they should be.

- The liability crisis is limiting our opportunities to enjoy the outdoors.

- We do not have a good overall picture of what we have; we lack systematic monitoring of resource conditions and public needs.

According to the President's Commission, 89 percent of Americans (approximately 188 million) use the outdoors for recreation. Fitness and health related reasons are the most commonly cited reasons people go outdoors for recreation. Other reasons that people engage in recreation cited by the Commission include: to be with other people, to experience excitement, to enjoy nature and the outdoors, and to escape. Surveys found that most Americans participate in swimming, walking, fishing, team sports, and bicycling. Also, the fastest growing activities are canoeing, swimming, boating, walking, bicycling, and snow skiing, with many of these popular and fast growing activities taking place in linear corridors -- roads, rivers, sidewalks, and snow paths. The recreation activities that adults reportedly participated in most often are listed in Table 1.

Table 1  
PARTICIPATION IN RECREATION  
ACTIVITIES BY AMERICAN ADULTS

Rank	Activity
1	Walking for Pleasure
2	Driving for Pleasure
3	Swimming Outdoors
4	Sightseeing
5	Picnicking
6	Fishing
7	Attend Outdoor Sports
8	Camping
9 (Tie)	Bicycling
9 (Tie)	Running and Jogging
9 (Tie)	Visit Zoos, Fairs & Amusement Parks

Source: President's Commission on Americans Outdoors





# THE FOUNDATION

*All good planning must begin with a survey of actual resources: the landscape, the people, the work-a-day activities in a community. Good planning does not begin with an abstract and arbitrary scheme that it seeks to impose on the community: it begins with a knowledge of existing conditions and opportunities.*

LEWIS MUMFORD





### HISTORIC PERSPECTIVE

Looking back at the history of the park and recreation movement, one recalls the old cliché "the more things change, the more they stay the same". Today's Wichita and Sedgwick County park system is the product of park development philosophies that arose under L.W. Clapp and the leadership established by the Board of Park Commissioners in 1922, and were reflected in the first plan for parks, prepared in 1923. From a design point of view, the **first** plan was more successful than any of the subsequent plans, developed in 1946, 1965 and 1976. This first Park Plan was based on the design concepts of Frederick Law Olmstead, the designer of New York City's Central Park. The "Central Park" concept, as it was conceived by Olmstead, involved the creation of a series of parks widely dispersed throughout a metropolitan area and connected by a system of parkways. The modern "greenway" is a direct descendant of the Olmstead concept of linking public open space for maximum benefit to the user.

As far back as the 1920's, Wichita had developed progressive park planning and design strategies as a part of the comprehensive planning process. The 1923 Wichita Comprehensive Plan completed by Harland Bartholomew, outlined a progressive plan for the development of a park system that included a combination of smaller neighborhood parks, large parks, linear drainage corridor parkways, and pleasure drive boulevards (Figures 1 & 2). The following excerpts are from Bartholomew's 1923 Plan stating why Wichita should not underestimate the need for recreation facilities and the importance of pursuing an aggressive park development strategy.

*A populous city without parks or pleasure grounds would suffer. Social standards would be low and the city **would find** its progress impeded by a prevalent dissatisfaction.*

*Recreation areas are the very soundest of civic investments. They promote health; they decrease crime; **they** add tremendously to the amenities of city life; they **enhance** property values, and they increase the desirability of the city as a home; they never wear out as sewers and pavements do; they grow in value and usefulness as the city grows.*

***Cities** with ample parks and playgrounds are always*

*referred to as 'progressive,' and men select such cities for business or residence because of this **characteristic**. There is a competition in park building among the larger municipalities which **often** at enormous **expense** are now supplying these overlooked necessities. The small city that places parks and pleasure grounds at **the** bottom of **its** budget is not practicing **economy**. It is merely inviting oppressive tax burdens and burdensome indebtedness at a later date. **If** the city grows it will **have** to have public parks and open spaces, regardless of cost.*

Park and open space concepts such as Pleasure Drives and Boulevards proposed for Wichita in the 1923 Comprehensive Plan included both naturalistic and landscaped approaches to the city's major arterial corridors. As can be seen in Figures 1 & 2, these proposed corridors were intended to not only link existing and proposed park and open space areas, but to enhance the visual and aesthetic appearance of the, drainageways and arterial roadways. Based on the philosophies of Thoreau and Leopold, such corridors within the urban framework provide not only a recreational opportunity, but also a haven for wildlife and protect our riparian areas for future generations.

Such traditional park development thoughts remain as viable today as when first envisioned. The passive recreation opportunities provided by this approach to park development are currently experiencing a resurgence of popularity in the United States, and a heightened awareness of the fragility of our environment. Also, the need to protect our natural resources for future generations has prompted changes from highly developed urban parks to more natural park areas. Park users are still around, even though conditions affecting their lives have changed. Recognizing these changes mandates the need for vision-**ary** planning to ensure that parks and open spaces remain viable for future generations. As stewards of the area's natural resources, Wichita and Sedgwick County must act to protect these resources and preserve the astute vision that L.W. Clapp and Harland Bartholomew saw in Wichita in the 1920's:

*"...the city's setting is not one of natural grandeur, but is studded all over with most appealing potentialities...the basin of the confluence of more than a dozen waterways, centering in the very heart of the city...more than 200 square miles of varied perfect natural setting for a city of any proportion."*

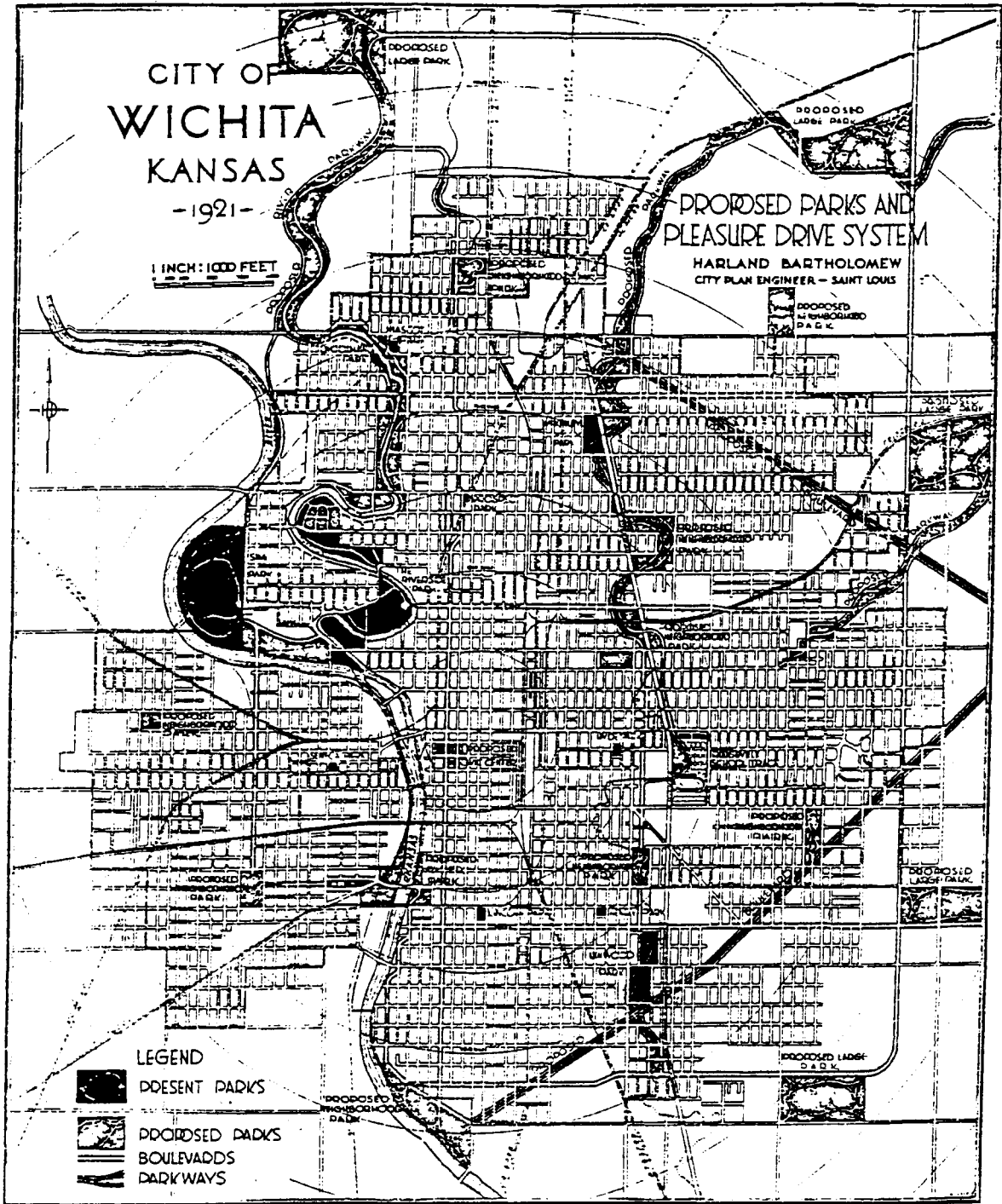
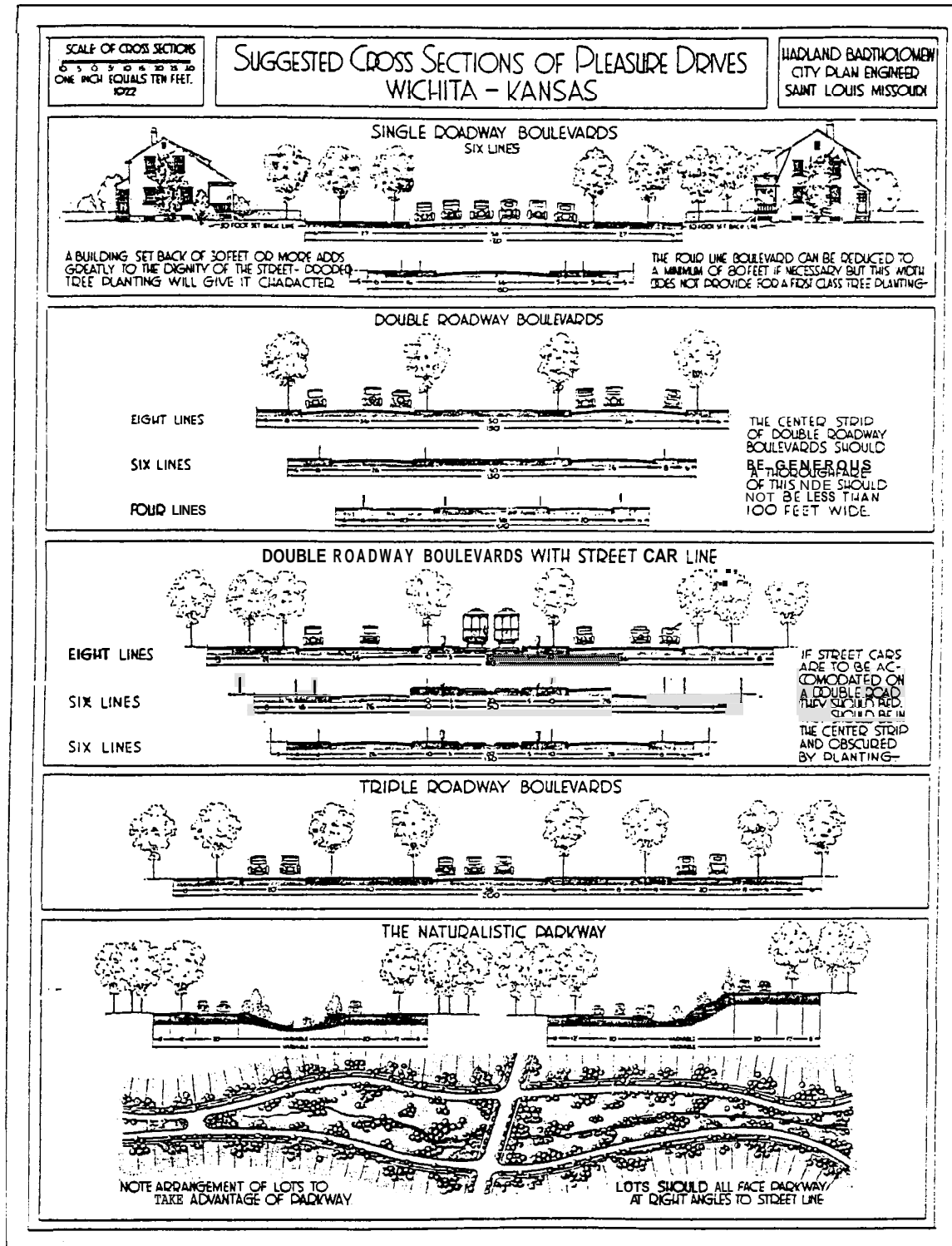


Figure 2



# THE FOUNDATION

## DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS

During the 1980's, the Wichita-Sedgwick County area experienced a steady growth in both population and development activity. From 1980 to 1990, Sedgwick County's population increased by over 36,500 residents. Wichita's population increase of over 24,100 accounted for approximately two thirds of the County's population growth, and the County's 19 small cities experienced a combined increase of 10,600 residents. The remaining unincorporated areas grew by 1,700 new residents between 1980 and 1990, with much of this growth located on Wichita's unincorporated fringe. According to the 1990 Census, the population residing in the unincorporated portions of townships immediately surrounding Wichita totalled 32,130 persons. Much of this population resides in Minneha and Gypsum townships in eastern Sedgwick County, in Kechi township north of Wichita, and in Riverside township south of Wichita (Figure 3).

Table 2 illustrates 1980 and 1990 Census populations, and population projections established by the Wichita-Sedgwick County Comprehensive Plan for the incorporated cities and Sedgwick County. The projections anticipate slow but steady growth for the County until the year 2010; however, the County's small cities are expected to experience more rapid growth over the same period. Overall, Sedgwick County's population is anticipated to increase by approximately 57,000 residents between 1990 and 2010. Approximately 72 percent of the County's new residents (41,000) will locate in the city of Wichita, with the combined population growth of the small cities anticipated to be approximately 17,000 new residents by 2010.

The unincorporated areas of Sedgwick County are expected to see a population decrease of about 1,000

people by the year 2010, due to the expansion of Wichita and other cities into these areas. Figure 3 shows the population for the unincorporated areas in Sedgwick County by Township.

During the past twenty years, Wichita's growth has been predominately residential, with growth occurring primarily in the far west, east, and northeast portions of the city. Also, the cities of Park City and Bel Aire to the immediate north of Wichita, and Derby and Haysville to the immediate south of Wichita, experienced significant population increases between 1980 and 1990.

Through 2010, Wichita's predominantly east-west growth pattern is expected to continue, with the majority of the city's population growth occurring in the west, east, and northeast areas. Wichita's west growth area is projected to experience a population growth of approximately 25,000 people, with a possible need to convert approximately 10 square miles of undeveloped land into urban use if current development densities continue. In eastern portions of Sedgwick County (northeast and east Wichita growth areas) population is expected to increase by 18,000 persons, requiring approximately 7 square miles of land for urbanization in this area based on current development densities.

While the urbanized areas of Sedgwick County experienced steady growth between 1980-1990, the older central area of Wichita did not benefit from the region's population growth. In fact, central Wichita lost over 11,000 people from 1980 to 1990, and this population decline is expected to continue in the future. It is anticipated that the central area population will decline by an additional 11,000 persons by the year 2010. Wichita's population projections for each of the city's growth areas are illustrated in Table 3.

**Table 2**  
**WICHITA-SEDGWICK COUNTY POPULATION**

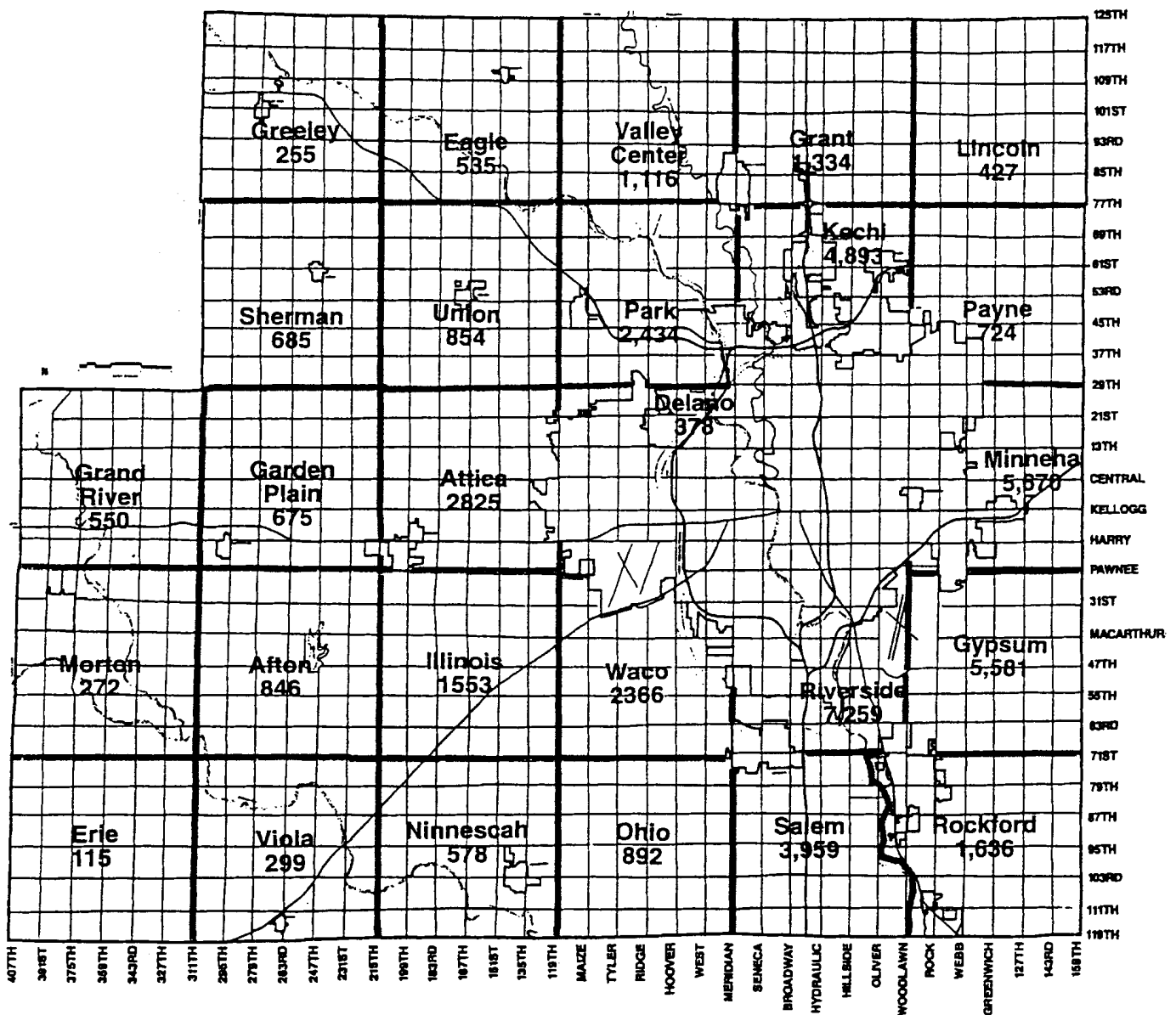
	1980	1990	Change 1980-90	Percent Change	2000 Projection	2010 Projection
<b>Wichita</b>	279,835	304,011	24,176	+8.6%	324,586	345,162
<b>Small Cities</b>	40,888	51,547	10,659	+26.1%	60,212	68,828
<b>Unincorporated Areas</b>	46,365	48,104	1,739	+3.8%	47,466	46,876
<b>Sedgwick Co. TOTAL</b>	367,088	403,662	36,574	<b>+9.9%</b>	432,264	460,866

Source: Metropolitan Area Planning Department (MAPD)



Figure 3

# 1990 Sedgwick County Uncorporated Population by Township



Source: 1990 Census

**Table 3**  
**WICHITA POPULATION PROJECTIONS BY SUBAREA**

Subarea	1990 Population (Census)	1994 Population Estimate*	2000 Population Projection*	2010 Population Projection*
Central	187,964	184,277	181,826	176,964
East	19,262	21,539	23,078	29,262
North	6,401	7,040	7,472	8,559
Northeast	23,606	26,128	27,832	31,601
South	27,328	29,524	31,003	34,327
West	39,450	47,728	53,374	64,449
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>304,011</b>	<b>316,236</b>	<b>324,586</b>	<b>345,162</b>

\*Source: MAPD Revised Annual Population Projections, January, 1995

With the movement of population out of the central areas of Wichita, the amount of vacant land and vacant housing units is expected to increase. In 1991, over 10,669 acres (16.6 sq. mi.) of vacant land existed within the corporate limits of Wichita. A majority of the vacant land was located in the developing areas of the city's fringe; however, the central urban area of the city accounted for 1,615 acres or approximately 2.5 square miles of vacant land, some of which is not currently available or marketable.

From 1980 to 1990 the number of vacant housing units in Wichita increased from 6,343 to 11,820. Also, the greatest number of housing units lost during the decade of the 1980's occurred in the very center of Wichita, which had an estimated 30-40 percent decline. This loss in the number of units follows a historical trend of housing unit decline in the central part of Wichita over the last 30 years.

By 2010, all areas of Sedgwick County will undergo greater population diversification through an aging population (and an increase in the number of older people living alone), and an increase in minority populations and single parent households. Overall, the general population continues to age, with the median age increasing to 31.8 years of age. In 1990, the number of persons older than 65 living alone was over 11,500 in Wichita and nearly 16,000 in Sedgwick County.

Trends show that the racial makeup of Sedgwick County's population continues to diversify. In 1990, the minority representation in Wichita increased to 53,835 persons or 17.7 percent of the total population. The Black population accounted for the largest minority group in Wichita and Sedgwick County, however, the Asian population nearly doubled between the 1980 and 1990 census' and represents the fastest growing minority group.

Single parent households also increased substantially from 1980 to 1990, and this trend is expected to continue in the future. In 1990, 17,436 households or 14.1 percent of all households in Wichita were headed by a single parent. Single parent male headed households showed the largest increase by jumping 53 percent from 1980 to 1990, while single parent female headed households increased 29 percent over the same period.

#### **PARK CLASSIFICATIONS**

Park facilities in Wichita and Sedgwick County vary in the amount of land and the type of facilities commonly associated with each park classification. The following descriptions outline the park classifications used in the 1976 Wichita-Sedgwick County Park and Open Space Master Plan, which are based on the park's size, available facilities, and population served. Also included are descriptions for linear parks as recommended by the Wichita Park Board.

### 1. Playground Parks

Size: 1½ acres  
Service Radius: ¼ to ½ miles  
Standard: 1 acre/1,000 persons  
Population Served: 500-2,000 persons

Playgrounds are typically small parcels of land which serve portions of adjacent nearby neighborhoods and sometimes stand alone as mini-parks or play lots in highly urban areas. In most cases, these parks are located in older urban areas where access to larger nearby parks is limited, with the parks providing limited facilities targeted toward specific population groups such as children or senior citizens. Typical facilities found in playgrounds include: swings, slides, sandboxes, benches, and landscaping. Examples of playgrounds or mini-parks are Barrington park (west Wichita), Heritage Park (central Wichita) and Piatt Park (central Wichita).

### 2. Neighborhood Parks

Size: 2-20 acres  
Service Radius: ½ miles  
Standard: 2 acres/1,000 persons  
Population Served: 2,000-10,000 persons

Neighborhood parks tend to be somewhat larger than playgrounds and serve the needs of one or two surrounding neighborhoods. Typically, they provide neighborhood oriented facilities such as playground facilities, playfields, multi-use courts, benches, tennis courts, and picnic shelters. Neighborhood parks are easily accessible to people in surrounding areas and geographically centered with safe access by foot, bicycle, and recreation corridors. Examples of these parks are Redbarn Park (west Wichita), Redbud Park (northeast Wichita), Murdock Park (central Wichita), and Hand Park in Derby.

### 3. Community Parks

Size: 15+ acres  
Service Radius: 1-1½ miles  
Standard: 3 acres/1,000 persons  
Population Served: 10,000-40,000 persons

Community parks serve the needs of two or more adjacent neighborhoods. They often include a wide range of neighborhood oriented facilities such as playground equipment, picnic areas, playfields, tennis and multi-use courts, outdoor shelters/assembly areas, recreation buildings, swimming pools, ice skating, spectator facilities, and restrooms. Community parks are often located near arterial

streets allowing for good vehicular access, and usually provide off-street parking. Persons in nearby neighborhoods may also access these parks by foot, bicycle and recreation corridors. Examples of these parks include Buffalo Park (west Wichita), Fairmount Park (northeast Wichita), Harrison Park (east Wichita), Linwood Park (central Wichita), and some community wide parks in Sedgwick County's small cities such as Clearwater Park in Clearwater.

### 4. Regional Parks

Size: 100+ acres; Sedgwick County minimum is 240 acres  
Service Radius: 5 miles +  
Standard: 5 acres/1,000 persons  
Population Served: 40,000 persons

Regional parks serve large portions of Wichita and Sedgwick County. These parks tend to have unique or natural areas and facilities which provide opportunities for nature study or environmental appreciation. When regional parks are developed for active uses they often include recreation facilities found in playgrounds, neighborhood, and community parks. Other common facilities include hiking and biking trails, recreation centers, golf courses, nature centers, multi-court/field sports complexes, and spectator facilities. Users frequently access regional parks facilities by automobile, therefore requiring extensive parking facilities. However, nearby residents may also access regional parks by foot, bicycle, and recreation corridors. Examples of regional parks include Lake Afton (western Sedgwick County), Sedgwick County Park (west Wichita), Pawnee Prairie Park (west Wichita), and the Riverside Park System (central Wichita).

### 5. Linear Parks and Recreation Corridors Open Space

Size and Service Radius: Varies, depending on location, park configuration, and facilities.

Linear parks and open spaces are typically elongated parcels of land related to parks, drainageways, waterways, trails, hedgerows, and roadways. They link parks, residential areas, and community activity centers, and other areas both physically and aesthetically. Often, linear parks and open spaces are used to connect traditional parks with trails and may incorporate some playground, neighborhood park facilities and activities to serve nearby neighborhoods. Linear open spaces support multiple recreation pursuits (e.g., bicycling, hiking, equestrian trail riding, and pedestrian activities). Since linear parks may include

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characteristics commonly associated with other park classifications, land acreage requirements for those parks can be included in the overall park system. An example of a linear park/open space is the Arkansas River bike trail and Riverside Park System (central Wichita).

### WICHITA PARK SYSTEM

The basic philosophy of the Wichita Department of Parks and Recreation emanates from the "City Beautiful" movement. This concept espouses the creation of healthy urban "forests" and public landscapes that not only contribute to the physical and mental well-being of the city's residents, but also generates pride in the community and serves as an attraction for visitors. The mission statement of the department is clear in this respect:

Provide abundant open space, parks, facilities and recreation activities in accordance with the Wichita-Sedgwick County Comprehensive Plan, in safe, pleasant and healthy surroundings, accessible to all residents and developed in such a way to preserve our natural resources, including landscapes and the urban forest, and to provide unique opportunities for the enjoyment of leisure time.

Table 4 identifies broad general categories of public open space in Wichita and the approximate acreage within those categories. The table illustrates that over 13,000 acres of public open space exist in the City. Wichita's public open space, as of January 1996, includes over 90 public parks and special use areas (facilities such as golf courses and city operated swimming pools). About a third of the total open space acreage in the city is actually useable by the public. In addition, the Park Department maintains all public open space owned by the City. These maintenance responsibilities give the Department the opportunity to further enhance the region's visual image.

### Traditional Parks

Within the context of the Department's mission statement, the Park Department is responsible for acquiring, developing, and maintaining parks, open space, and recreational facilities, and for providing recreational programs for the community. Over 3,600 acres of park land and recreational facilities are included in the Wichita park system. Services provided by the Department include landscaping, forestry, Botanica operations, maintenance and recreational programming. The Wichita Park Department's recreational programs include: golf, swimming, tennis, adult and youth sports, and arts/crafts.

Table 4  
WICHITA PARK DEPARTMENT MAINTAINED  
OPEN SPACE

Category	Acreage
Parks	3,648
Big & Little Arkansas Riverbanks	637
Drainageways'	688
<b>Stormwater Retention Holding Ponds</b>	36
<b>Wichita/Valley Center Floodway'</b>	6,400
Highways: Kellogg, K-96, K-15 and K-42	552
Canal Route'	277
Major Arterial Streets	509
<b>Residential/Collector Streets</b>	--
Medials: Grass	54
Medials: Paved, 120 Locations	--
Public Facilities	26
Other Properties	365
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>13,192</b>

Source: Wichita Park Department, January, 1996

'While these facilities are mowed by the Park Department, the primary responsibility for other maintenance lies with the Public Works Department

Table 5 illustrates Wichita's total park acreage by park type. As the table indicates, park acreage in Wichita is dominated by regional park areas which serve residents of several neighborhoods and large portions of the city and county. These parks generally have unique areas or facilities used by residents from all parts of the surrounding region. Wichita's regional facilities include Chisholm Creek Park in the northeast, Sedgwick County Park (operated by Sedgwick County) in the northwest, Pawnee Prairie Park in the southwest, South Lakes Park in the south, and the Arkansas River Parks through central Wichita.

Table 5  
WICHITA PARK ACREAGE BY PARK TYPE

Park Type	1994 Acreage
Playground	6
Neighborhood	244
Community	822
SUBTOTAL	1,072
Regional	2,206*
TOTAL	3,278

\*Since it serves community and regional park needs for residents of west Wichita, Sedgwick County Park has been included in these figures.

In addition to unique offerings, these large parks often include facilities found in playground, neighborhood, and community parks. Approximately two-thirds of Wichita's park acreage (2,206 acres) is in the form of regional park facilities, adding significantly to the city's park acreage. While Wichita area residents are served by several regional park facilities, in many instances, such facilities are not conveniently accessible for a large portion of the population.

When compared to regional parks, Wichita's smaller parks are distributed throughout the city, although still congregated in particular areas. In 1996, nearly 60 percent of the park acreage for small parks was located in the central area of Wichita and 23 percent was located in the west. Overall, 1,072 acres of park land were devoted to small parks (playgrounds, neighborhood parks, and community parks). These parks generally serve citizens of adjacent or nearby neighborhoods.

Wichita's parks typically contain a number of facilities, with the most common being children's play areas, multi-use courts, picnic areas and picnic tables, restroom facilities, softball diamonds, and tennis courts. Eighteen of the city's parks include open shelters, eleven parks have soccer fields, and ten parks include swimming pool facilities. A complete listing of Wichita's parks is found in Appendix A.

### Greenways/Bikeways

In 1991, the Greenways Commission was formed by

the Wichita City Council as a community advisory board to make recommendations for the potential development, preservation, and maintenance of greenways. As defined by the Commission, the term **greenway** describes vegetated corridors which link people to our communities' open spaces, recreation, culture, history, and nature.

The Greenways Commission seeks:

- To define and outline the principles and standards inherent to the concept of greenways;
- To evaluate, and designate subsequent greenways to be preserved, developed and/or maintained;
- To encourage developers to voluntarily dedicate and develop areas as open spaces with public access;
- To include greenways principles in public land easement attainments and public works projects; and,
- To include the Greenways Commission in the City review process of projects which potentially impact established or potential greenways.

As of 1994, Wichita had four bike trails for a total of 16 miles. The bikeways included the Arkansas River Path, the Canal Hike and Bike Trails, the Downtown Bikeway, and the Cessna Park Trail. In 1990, the Wichita City Council adopted the Comprehensive Bicycle Plan for the Wichita Metropolitan Area, which identifies the existing and recommended bicycle paths for Wichita-Sedgwick County. The Bicycle Plan's goals are to extend existing paths and to connect new paths to provide a more complete network, thus encouraging greater commuting and recreational use. The existing and proposed bikeway system is illustrated in Figure 4.

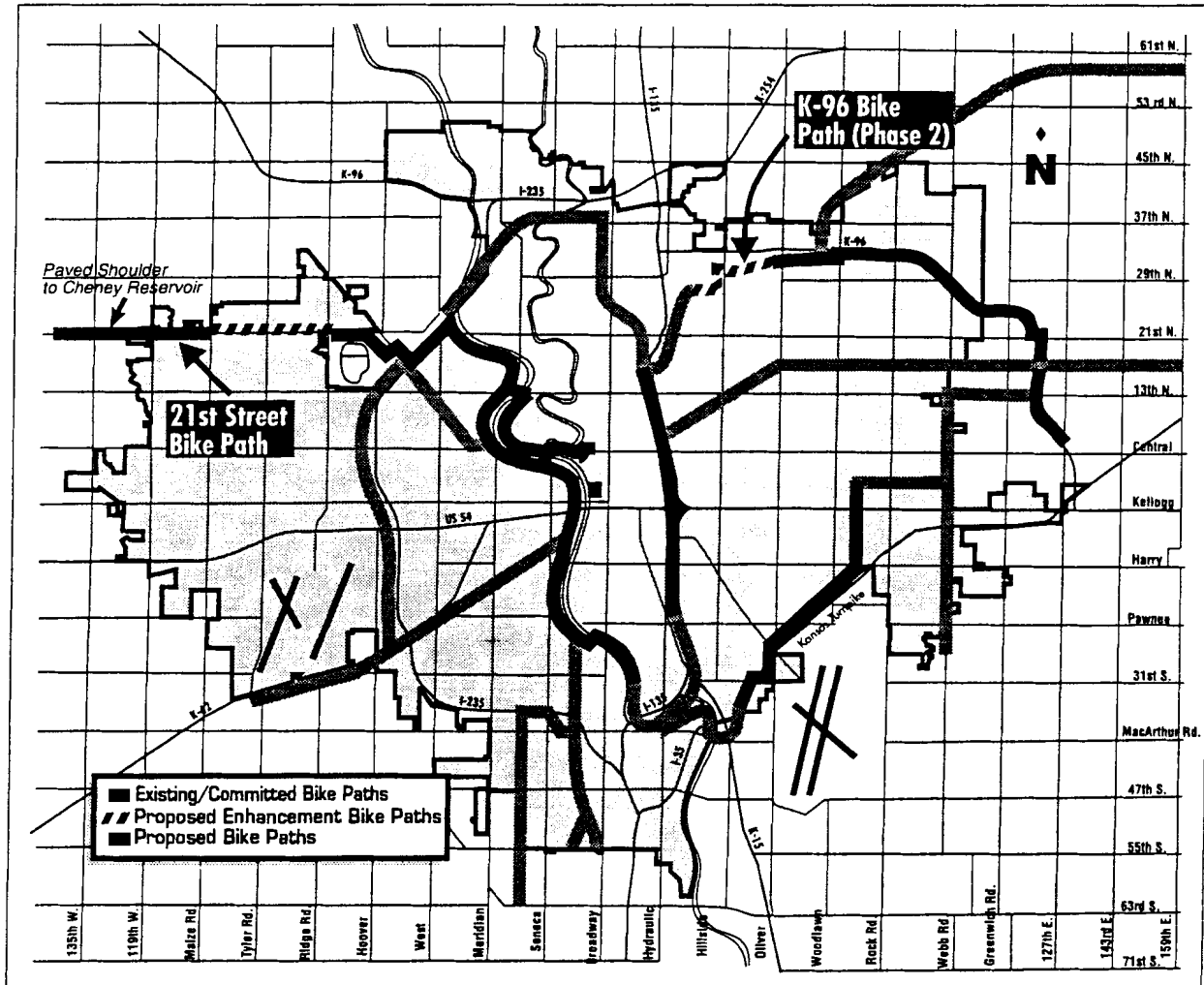
### Budget Highlights

The Wichita Park Department Budget has fluctuated somewhat during recent years, however, not dramatically. Table 6 illustrates the park Department's budget from 1993 to 1996. During the early 1990's, the department's annual budget experienced slight increases due to increased open space maintenance responsibilities.

Despite budget increases in the early 1990's, increasing costs have necessitated cost cutting measures in the Park Department. Possible reductions being considered include recreation center closings, reduction in the number of city operated swimming pools, and closure of the greenhouse. Fiscal constraints are anticipated to continue

Figure 4

## Existing, Committed & Proposed Bicycle Paths



- \* **Committed** refers to bicycle paths for which federal funds have been committed.
- \* **Proposed Enhancement Bike Paths** refers to projects for which a funding grant application has been submitted.
- \* The **Proposed Bike Paths** category shows potential paths which have no funds committed yet.

**Table 6**  
**WICHITA PARK DEPARTMENT BUDGET**

Year	Budget	Change from Previous Year
1993 (Adopted)	\$10,264,190	+\$74,190
1994 (Adopted)	\$10,486,730	+\$222,540
1995 (Adopted)	\$10,708,850	+\$222,120
1996 (Adopted)	\$10,616,490	<\$92,360>

in the future. Therefore, it is important that the department set priorities for services and diversify funding sources.

Table 7 illustrates 1994 and 1995 actual expenditures and revenues for the Wichita Park Department. In recent years the City's General Fund has been the primary revenue source for the Park Department, comprising about 75 percent of park expenditures. In 1995, Park user fees accounted for nearly \$1.7 million in revenue or approximately 16.3 percent of the Department's expenditures. In 1995, the Kansas alcohol tax generated \$849,000 annually in revenue for special projects in Wichita. The Kansas alcohol tax is applied to the sale of alcoholic liquor in the state, a portion of which is dedicated to park development projects and distributed to park entities throughout the state.

1992 budget expenditures and per capita spending for various Kansas communities are provided in Table 8. When compared to other cities in Kansas, Wichita's per

capita park expenditures fall below the average. Of the Kansas cities surveyed, the average per capita spending was \$38.28. Wichita's per capita spending of \$33.70 is approximately \$6.41 below the average of the other communities (\$40.11).

#### **Capital Improvement Program**

Table 9 presents funding sources and capital improvements for Wichita parks, as identified by the Wichita 1996-2005 Capital Improvements Program (CIP). From 1996-2005, the City's CIP anticipates spending \$23,786,000 on Park Department projects. The table clearly delineates the city's reliance upon general obligation bonds which are paid by the City at-large, with over 88 percent of the capital dollars expected to come from such sources. The CIP also anticipates the use of private sponsors and donors to assist in rehabilitating and developing playground resources in various parks. However, these private sources account for only 1.6 percent of the City's planned annual CIP park projects.

Approximately \$1.8 million is expected to come from State and Federal funding sources. The Wichita Parks Department received funds from the State of Kansas and from federal sources for the development of the Wichita National Environmental Center in the Chisholm Creek Park as required by a legal agreement with federal and state governments. In addition, a grant of \$500,000 in state funding for the South Lakes Park has been received.

Over the ten year period from 1996 to 2005, Wichita expects to target a large portion of the planned park improvement expenditures on maintenance and rehabilitation of existing facilities, and parking lot paving and reconstruction. Projects at existing parks are focused pri-

**Table 7**  
**1994 AND 1995 REVENUE SOURCES FOR THE WICHITA PARK DEPARTMENT <sup>1</sup>**

Type of Funding	1994		1995	
User Fees	\$1,694,529	16.5%	\$1,697,106	16.3%
Alcohol Tax	\$875,770	8.5%	\$849,540	8.2%
General Fund	\$7,688,623	75%	\$7,844,567	75.5%
EXPENDITURES	\$10,258,922	100%	\$10,391,213	100%

Source: Wichita Budget Office and Wichita Park and Recreation Department

<sup>1</sup> Excluding golf course revenue and expenditures and CDBG funds.

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Table 8  
BUDGET COMPARISON AMONG KANSAS CITIES

	Population	Total Budget	User Fees	Per Capita Spending*
Wichita, KS	304,011	\$1 1,954,550	\$1,709,173	\$33.70
Manhattan, KS	37,712	\$2,524,083	\$934,777	\$42.14
Salina, KS	42,303	\$2,105,450	\$871,048	\$29.18
Topeka, KS	119,883	\$7,830,877	\$2,515,184	\$44.34
Overland Park, KS	111,790	\$5,409,942	Not Available	\$48.39
Lenexa, KS	34,034	\$2,073,234	\$505,553	\$46.06,
Lawrence, KS	65,608	\$2,641,244	\$638,232	\$30.53

\*Total budget minus user fees divided by 1990 population

Table 9  
CITY OF WICHITA PARK DEPARTMENT  
1996-2005 CIP EXPENDITURE BY PROJECT CATEGORY  
(Dollars in Thousands)

Year	General Obligation Bonds (GO)	State	Private	Federal	Other	TOTAL
1996	2,459	0	40	951	400	3,850
1997	1,097		40	265		1,402
1998	1,139		40	366		1,545
1999	1,736		40	265		2,041
2000	4,496		40			4,536
2001	4,292		40			4,332
2002	2,910		40			2,950
2003	940		40			980
2004	610		40			650
2005	1,460		40			1,500
TOTAL	\$21,139	\$0	\$400	\$1,847	\$400	\$23,786

Source: 1996 City of Wichita CIP and Wichita Park and Recreation Department



marily upon increasing accessibility and safety for park users and enhancing aesthetics and visual appearance.

### Land Acquisition

From 1996 to 2002, \$200,000 is targeted annually toward land acquisition for new parks and public open space throughout Wichita. A majority of the expenditures are for unimproved land areas with few specific park locations having been identified. In addition to the unidentified land acquisition projects, additional park expansion projects are expected at Grove Park, Chisholm Creek Park, and South Lakes Park.

### Bikeways

The Wichita CIP includes the development of several priority bikeway projects. Table 10 lists the six high priority bicycle projects underway or planned. Some of these projects will be funded through the Kansas Department of Transportation's (KDOT) "Transportation Enhancement Program" with a 20 percent local matching allocation.

In the past, bikeway development has received a low priority. Few of these planned CIP projects received funding. To overcome this, the Metropolitan Planning Organization has applied for, and has received, grants under the Transportation Enhancement Program. These grants are to assist in bike path **planning** and development in Wichita and Sedgwick County. Thus far, the Enhancement program has awarded Wichita \$1,135,000 for the

development of four bicycle paths, plus \$241,000 for another bicycle path if the Transportation Enhancement Program of the next Federal Transportation Act is reauthorized. However, despite these federal funds, it is anticipated that future bikeway projects will continue to hinge upon outside funding sources due to a lack of local funding.

Additional opportunities for bikeway development are included in the city and county's road widening and improvement projects. Several improvements are **planned** for arterial roads in which either bikeways or larger sidewalks (suitable to bikers) can be built. As a method of incorporating such improvements into road projects, the City Council adopted a bicycle road improvement policy in 1990 to include wider sidewalks, paved shoulders, or wide curb lanes along road improvement areas that coincide with the adopted bikeway path corridors.

### Greenways

Analysis of the 1996-2005 Wichita CIP reveals that no funding is anticipated for projects devoted to **greenway** development at a city wide level. However, policymakers have recently given approval for a **greenway** project in conjunction with flood control on 3rd Street in central Wichita. The project consists of replacing the existing roadway with a drainage channel lined with vegetation, pathways for pedestrians and bikes, and playgrounds. Also, long range plans anticipate the development of a **greenway** project as a connector between Grove Park and Chisholm Creek Park in northeast Wichita.

## SEDGWICK COUNTY PARKS

The organization of the Sedgwick County Parks differs in size and scope from that of Wichita and many of the county's small cities. The county does not have a park department. Instead, Sedgwick County's parks and special use facilities are divided into five separate divisions, each of which encompasses its own mission. County Park divisions report directly to the Sedgwick County Manager's **Office**. Each County park or special use facility has its own "**master plan**," implemented through the County Capital Improvement Program (CIP).

The County operates two parks, Lake **Afton** Park and the Sedgwick County Park, with a total of 1,200 acres of land. The County also operates three special use facilities, the Kansas Coliseum and Camper Park, Old **Cowtown** Museum, and the Sedgwick County Zoo. The location of Lake **Afton** Park and Sedgwick County Park are shown on maps 7 and 8.

**Table 10**  
**CURRENT BICYCLE TRAIL PROJECTS**

Priority	Project
1	K-96: Wichita East City Limits to Oliver St. (Phase I)
2	Gypsum Creek: Cessna Park to Turnpike Dr.
3	Arkansas River: Meridian to Seneca
4	K-96: Oliver St. to Grove Park (Phase II)
5	Arkansas River: 13th to Meridian
6	21st: Ridge Road to Maize Road

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In addition, the Sedgwick County Fairgrounds in Cheney provide several facilities for all county residents. These facilities include ball diamonds, basketball courts, horseshoe pits, restrooms and parking.

The following county park summaries include a general description of available facilities, the park mission statement, and an analysis of budget and planned CIP expenditures. Although classified and funded under the category Parks and Recreation, the County's three special use facilities and the fairgrounds are not included in this detailed analysis, since these facilities serve primarily a specialized function.

### Lake Afton Park

*Lake Afton Park provides fishing, camping, swimming, boating, and meeting facilities for the use and enjoyment of the citizens of Sedgwick County, as well as providing a vacation site for out-of-county and out-of-state visitors.*

Lake Afton, located 25 miles southwest of Wichita, was constructed from 1939 to 1942 on lands once inhabited by the Kiowa, Comanche, Wichita, Osage and Southern Cheyenne Indian Tribes. The park, which serves as a regional facility for the county, occupies a 720 acre site and includes a 258 acre lake. Facilities at the Park include six shelter houses; many open shelters; modern restrooms; R.V. dumps; a boat ramp; fishing docks with feeder; grocery store and bait shop; three swimming areas; camping areas with and without electrical hookups; shooting range; and an observatory.

Lake Afton also includes a wide range of recreational activities such as boating, go-cart races, antique car shows, jet ski races, family gatherings and picnics, dances, young hunters safety clinics, company picnics, fishing contests, water skiing, camping groups, and state and national jamborees. The Park also features the Lake Afton Public Observatory with a 16 inch telescope.

The budget for Lake Afton Park fluctuated somewhat in the past three years, primarily due to capital improvement expenditures and increasing personal services costs. The budget increased from approximately \$351,728 in 1994 to \$370,509 in 1995. Last year, the County 1995 CIP expenditures for Lake Afton Park were primarily focused upon the construction of a new office and storage building, parking lot, and roof replacements on open shelters.

### Sedgwick County Park

*Sedgwick County Park provides fishing, picnicking, tennis, softball, basketball, horseshoes, volleyball, ice skating, 6.5 miles of bicycle trails, a 1 mile fitness trail, and playground facilities for the enjoyment of Sedgwick County residents and visitors. The park occupies 480 acres, including several lakes and large open areas.*

Sedgwick County Park serves as a regional park and open space facility for Sedgwick County residents. Located near northwest Wichita, it is bordered by the Sedgwick County Zoo on the east, Ridge Road on the west, 13th Street on the south, and 21st Street on the north.

Budget expenditures for the past three years at the Sedgwick County Park show an overall increase from 1994 to 1996. Personal services, contractual services, and interfund expenditures all increased during the early 1990's. However, capital improvements at the Park are responsible for a large part of the budget fluctuation. Overall, the Park's budget increased from \$160,000 in 1994 to \$195,157 in 1996. In 1996 the bicycle trail network in the Park was expanded and \$2,500 was budgeted in 1995 for city water and for insulation for the Park Director's residence.

### Budget Highlights

Departmental expenditures for Sedgwick County's Park and Recreation divisions are largely focused upon the Kansas Coliseum and the Sedgwick County Zoo. Table I I illustrates actual expenditures for the County's two parks. Overall, these parks account for less than 10 percent of the Park and Recreation Budget. The majority of the expenditures at both park facilities are for personal services. Revenues at the Sedgwick County Park and Lake Afton Park consist primarily of concession sales, camper fees, shelter rentals, and building rentals.

At the county level, little money is budgeted for new park land acquisition. While the County has not shown an interest in expanding its park system, it has been systematic in the development of both its parks and special use facilities. Each individual park and special use facility has its own "plan," with those plans being implemented through the County Capital Improvement Program. On occasion, the County also contributes to local park projects such as South Lakes Regional Park in the Haysville-south Wichita area. At South Lakes, the County is anticipated to contribute to the park's development costs, with the

Table 11  
SEDGWICK COUNTY PARK BUDGETS

Park	1994 Actual Expenditures	1995 Revised Budget	1996 Revised Budget
Lake Afton	\$351,728	\$422,988	\$370,509
Sedgwick County Park	\$160,333	\$172,709	\$195,157
TOTAL	\$512,061	\$595,697	\$565,666

day to day activities, maintenance, and funding to be managed by other park providers.

### Capital Improvement Program

From 1994 to 1998, the Sedgwick County CIP calls for spending nearly \$10,000,000 on projects in the Park and Recreation budget. The budget includes improvements to the Kansas Coliseum, Lake Afton Park, the Lake Afton Observatory, Old Cowtown and Sedgwick County Park and the Zoo. For Lake Afton, \$298,000 is planned in capital expenditures over the next 5 years. Longer term projects include: a shelter for Camp Fellowship, restrooms for the Nature Trail and Speedboat Cove and parking for the Young Hunters Range. For Sedgwick County Park, \$200,000 is planned for Horseshoe Lake Road surfacing and a bicycle trail in 1996.

### Bikeways

In 1992, the County resurfaced 21st Street North from the Wichita city limits to Cheney Reservoir, and as a part of the project included wide shoulders suitable for bicyclists on both sides of the roadway. The 16 mile stretch serves as a link from Wichita to western Sedgwick County and the recreational activities and nature areas found at Cheney Reservoir. In addition, the County developed two additional bike trails (21st/Zoo Blvd: I-235 to Ridge Rd. and K-96 Bypass: Central to Wichita east city limits.). Further development of Sedgwick County Park's internal trail system is also planned. In the future, it is possible that other bikeway improvements (such as shoulder widening) can be included in roadway widening, reconstruction, and/or resurfacing projects.

### OTHER PARKS AND OPEN SPACE

#### Small Cities Park Inventory

In addition to Wichita and Sedgwick County's park

facilities, several parks and open space areas exist in the county's small cities. Table 12 illustrates the number of parks and the total park acreage for the small cities within Sedgwick County. Parks located in the county's small cities are under the jurisdiction of each respective city. Currently, cities in Sedgwick County pursue individual park and open space development programs, and there is no overall coordinating park department or agency for the small cities, Wichita, or Sedgwick County.

### School Districts

Special regard must be applied to other open spaces, such as public and private school recreation areas. These areas have not been included in the park acreage calculations because the public usability of such areas or facilities could not be determined. In 1990, it was estimated that 666 acres of public school and 72 acres of private school recreation areas were available to citizens for limited periods of time.

Currently, joint use of park and public school facilities serve to alleviate deficiencies in some areas of Wichita and Sedgwick County. Informal agreements between area school districts and the Wichita Park Department include use of recreation facilities, as well as joint educational and recreational programming and intramural activities. When feasible, the Park Department also promotes joint public park and public school facilities in new development areas.

### Private Reserves

Other resource areas of limited use include private reserves and undeveloped or lowland areas used primarily for drainage, and open spaces in new subdivision designs. Estimates in 1990 found that Wichita's newer subdivisions included some 541 acres of private open space. The greatest amount of private open space is

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**Table 12**  
**SEDGWICK COUNTY SMALL CITIES**  
**PARK INVENTORY**

	Number of Parks	Total Park Acreage
Andale	1	3.3
Bel Aire	2	1.57
Bentley	None	--
Cheney I	5	82.78
Clearwater		
Colwich		
Derby	9	177
Eastborough	1	6
Garden Plain	2	12
Goddard	1	20
Haysville	11	77.85
Kechi	None	--
Maize		
Mount Hope		
Mulvane	1	4.6
	6	15.8
Park City	3	5.35
	4	43.5
Sedgwick	1	--
Valley Center	3	12
viola	2	4.7
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>525.95</b>

<sup>1</sup> Includes an 80 acre golf course.

<sup>2</sup> Located in Harvey County.

located in the west and northeast areas of Wichita, reflecting the areas of newer development.

Private reserves maintained by homeowner associations are a recent tool being utilized in some subdivision designs. However, the central area of Wichita (the majority of the city) reflects an older, more urbanized area with limited private open space. While this private open space, provides benefits such as flood protection, land use buffers, wildlife habitats, and community visual enhancement, such open space (when meeting size, facility and availability standards) can be used to reduce the need for public lands. In some instances, private reserves have not been developed for recreational use and are used primarily for drainage. These are not satisfactory for legitimate use as recreational resources.

### Floodplains and Wetlands

Sedgwick County is fortunate to be endowed with a variety of creeks, streams, and rivers of great natural beauty. Floodplains have been identified throughout Sedgwick County by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) as areas that are prone to flooding (generally low, flat areas close to rivers or creeks).

Floodplains and wetlands provide habitat for local and migratory wildlife. Fourteen species of wildlife in Sedgwick County are protected, including the eastern spotted skunk and the speckled chub. Any development within these flood prone areas is subject to FEMA regulations and possibly other federal reviews and permits. For that reason, floodplains are often considered ideal sites for parkways, open space, or nature preserves because of their diverse vegetation, endangered wildlife, and natural beauty.

Wetlands are low areas where standing water or wet soils exist during part of the growing season most years. These wet conditions hinder the growth of plants that are not adapted to wet conditions. Wetlands provide important economic benefits by reducing flood damage and controlling erosion; ecological benefits by filtering pollutants and supplying habitat for many plants and animals; and social values by way of open spaces that support outdoor recreation and aesthetic appreciation.

To date, no analysis has been conducted to identify wetland areas in Sedgwick County. Only the Pracht Wetland, located at 29th Street North and Maize Road on the west edge of Wichita, has been recognized as a wetland area in the county. In 1992, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service conducted an inventory of plants at Pracht Wetland, with approximately 29 species of hydric plants identified. The site's vegetation is dominated by water tolerant plants, hydrophytes, which provide habitat for a large variety of resident and migratory wildlife.





## THE NEED

*"When we build let us think that we build -  
forever. Let it not be for present delight nor  
for present use alone. Let it be such work as  
our descendants will thank us for, and let us  
think, as we lay stone on stone, that a time is  
to come when these stones will be held sacred  
because we have touched them, and that men  
will say as they look upon the labor and  
wrought substance of them: 'See? This our  
Fathers did for us.'"*

JOHN RUSKIN







This section of Parks and Pathway focuses upon Wichita and Sedgwick County's existing and future park and recreation needs. Two approaches are used to determine future needs. First, national population-based standards are used to compare present facilities with desirable levels of service. Second, a community survey is used to recognize citizen demand for park facilities and services. Use of the survey, conducted in 1991 by the Wichita City Manager's Office and the Wichita Park Department, allows this plan to be "citizen driven" rather than entirely based on national standards. Since similar surveys do not exist for Sedgwick County's small cities or the unincorporated areas of the county, this plan cautiously extrapolates some of the findings to the remaining portions of the County.

### **PARK NEEDS AS DEFINED BY STANDARDS**

Traditionally, the process of identifying park and recreation needs is accomplished by applying national, regional or local standards. Generally, these standards are based on population **and/or** distance criteria. Standards can be expressed in a variety of ways: 1) facilities per unit of population, 2) percent of developed area, 3) user characteristics and participation projections, or 4) carrying capacity of the land. By using a quantitative evaluation process, an assessment of the community's resources can be made. This analysis assists decision making in several ways:

- It allows the community to determine if it is meeting recognized standards for service delivery.
- It allows the community to determine what facilities and resources are needed and in what quantity (from a standards viewpoint).
- It allows the community to determine if specific areas are inadequately served in comparison to the community as a whole.
- It provides a starting point for policy determinations and capital improvement budgeting.

Many times standards are used as a final word on the number of facilities "needed" by a community. Yet, it should be understood that while standards are helpful, these same standards should be considered flexible guidelines, not absolutes.

### **Wichita Existing Park Acreage**

In 1976, the Wichita-Sedgwick County Park and

Open Space Plan established the standard of 11 park acres for every 1,000 Wichita residents. The standard, which excludes facilities such as special use parks or private open space, was composed of the following:

- 5 acres of Regional or Metropolitan Parks;
- 3 acres of Community Parks;
- 2 acres of Neighborhood Parks; and
- 1 acre of **Playground/Mini-Park**

Table 13 lists adopted park acreage standards for comparable **midwest** communities. The table demonstrates that Wichita's standard of 11 acres per 1,000 population is lower than most comparable cities surveyed. Assuming that Peoria and Lincoln use 6 acres per thousand population as the standard, the average for the eight cities surveyed is 13 acres per 1,000 population. The actual level of service provided by the cities averages 25 acres per 1,000.

Since 1991, the Wichita Park and Recreation Board has been recommending that the city's park acreage standard be increased to 15 acres per 1,000. The Board also recommended that the additional 4 acres per thousand population be used for the acquisition and/or inclusion of open space and corridors to connect existing parks. This recommended increase would place Wichita at a level equivalent to that of the comparable cities.

Existing park acreage (as of December 1995) is shown by park type in Table 14 for each of Wichita's subareas. These park acreages include both existing parks and undeveloped or partially developed land identified for future parks owned by the City of Wichita, such as The Meadows Park in west Wichita and South Lakes Park in south Wichita. The table reveals that approximately two-thirds of Wichita's total current park acreage is in the form of regional park facilities. These large park areas have a significant impact on the subarea analysis by adding significantly to park acreage totals, particularly in the west, northeast and central areas of Wichita. This is especially true of the west subarea where the Sedgwick County Park has been included due to its extensive use as a community resource by that area.

### **Subarea Analysis**

Using 11 acres per 1000 persons (excluding open space and pathways), Table 15 illustrates 1996 park acreage **surplus** and **deficits** (shown by negative numbers) for each of Wichita's six subareas. Analysis of existing parks, reveals that Wichita had a deficit in park land at the end of 1996. As the table indicates, the large acreage

## THE NEED

Table 13  
COMPARABLE CITIES PARK ACREAGE STANDARDS

	1990 Population	Park Acreage Standard	Actual Park Acres	Actual Acres/ 1,000 Population Ratio
Austin, TX	465,622	15	12,500	27
Des Moines, IA*	193,187	--	3,000	16
Kansas City, MO	434,829	22	10,000	23
Lincoln, NE	191,972	6-10	5,600	29
Oklahoma City, OK*	444,719	--	6,300	14
Omaha, NE	335,795	22	8,200	24
Peoria, IL	113,504	6-10	7,900	70
Tulsa, OK	367,302	10	5,500	15
Wichita, KS	304,011	11	3,403	11

\*Des Moines and Oklahoma City did not report a park acreage standard

Table 14  
EXISTING WICHITA PARK ACREAGE BY SUBAREA  
(As of January, 1996)

Subarea	Playground	Neighborhood	Community	Regional	Special Use	TOTAL
Central	5 <sup>1</sup>	155	494	572	303	<b>1,529</b>
East	0	0	40	0	0	<b>40</b>
North	0	0	0	0	32	<b>32</b>
Northeast	0	7	39	282	0	<b>328</b>
South	0	10	70	247	103	<b>430</b>
West	1	72	179	405	412	<b>1,769</b>
TOTAL	6	244	822	2,206	850	<b>4,128</b>

<sup>1</sup> Acreage is rounded to nearest whole number.

Table 15  
EXISTING PARK ACREAGE NEEDS (SURPLUS/DEFICIT) BY SUBAREA'  
(As of January, 1996)

Subarea	Playground	Neighborhood	Community	SUBTOTAL	Regional	TOTAL
Central	-179	-213	-59	<b>-452</b>	-349	<b>-801</b>
East	-22	-43	-24	<b>-89</b>	-108	<b>-197</b>
North	-7	-14	-21	<b>-42</b>	-35	<b>-77</b>
Northeast	-26	-45	-39	<b>-110</b>	151	<b>41</b>
<b>South</b>	-30	-50	-18	<b>-98</b>	100	<b>2</b>
West	-47	-23	36	<b>-35</b>	866	<b>831</b>
<b>TOTAL<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>-311</b>	<b>-388</b>	<b>-127</b>	<b>-826</b>	<b>625</b>	<b>-201</b>

<sup>1</sup> Based upon 11 acres of Wichita's proposed standard of 15 park acres per 1,000 persons. While 4 acres of pathways/open space have not been included, they are discussed at length in Section 4. Numbers have been rounded to nearest acre.

<sup>2</sup> Surplus/Deficit Calculation:

Supply - Demand = Need (Surplus or Deficit (-))

Supply = # park acres presently available (Table 14 provided by MAPD and Wichita Parks Department)

Demand = Population estimate by year (Table 3) x # acres/1,000 persons (playground = 1 acre; neighborhood = 2 acres; community = 3 acres and regional = 5 acres)

Example: To calculate the 1993 Northeast Subarea Community Park need (surplus/deficit)

Supply	39 acres (Table 14)
Demand	26,128 persons x 3 acres/1,000 persons = 78.39 acres (rounded up = 76 acres)
Need	39 - 78 = -39 acres (DEFICIT)

surplus in the west overshadows much of the deficits experienced in most areas of the city. Table 15 further shows that all Wichita subareas had small park acreage deficits as of December 1996, particularly playgrounds and neighborhood parks. As shown earlier in Table 14, no Wichita Park system playgrounds were located outside the central and west subareas.

The acreage analysis demonstrates that Wichita's central subarea has the largest degree of park land deficiency in the city. In 1996, the central subarea had a combined deficit of 452 acres in smaller parks such as playgrounds, neighborhood parks, and community parks, and a deficit of 349 acres in the larger regional park classification. The central area's greatest, small park acreage deficiency was in neighborhood parks with a shortage of 213 acres.

Table 16 illustrates estimated surplus and deficit park acreage for each of Wichita's subareas for the year 2010. Assuming no new acquisitions are made, an overall defi-

ciency of park acreage will result within the city. Using the population projections in the Wichita-Sedgwick County Comprehensive Plan, the central area will decrease by a projected 11,000 residents by 2010, therefore reducing the potential park need. However, by 2010 the central area will still have the largest acreage deficiency within the city; a shortage of approximately 408 acres of park land given current city standards. Using the standard of 11 acres per 1,000 population, the overall deficit in park acreage, excluding special use areas, equals 519 acres in the Year 2010.

By the Year 2010, the city's subareas will have a combined deficiency of 340 acres in playgrounds and 446 acres in neighborhood parks as shown in Table 16. When considering regional parks, the west, northeast, and south areas of the city had adequate levels of park land in 1996, according to the city's adopted standard. However, both the central and east areas had a need for at least one regional park facility.

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Table 16  
ESTIMATED 2010 PARK ACREAGE NEEDS (SURPLUS/DEFICIT) BY SUBAREA'  
(Assuming No New Land Acquisitions)\*

Subarea	Playground	Neighborhood	Community	SUBTOTAL	Regional	TOTAL
Central	-172	-199	-37	-408	-312	-720
East	-29	-59	-48	-135	-146	-282
North	-9	-17	-26	-51	-43	-94
Northeast	-32	-56	-56	-143	124	-19
<b>South</b>	-34	-59	-33	-126	76	-51
West	-64	-57	-14	-135	782 <sup>3</sup>	647
<b>TOTAL</b>	-340	-446	-213	-999	480	-519 <sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Based upon 11 acres of Wichita's proposed standard of 15 park acres per 1,000 persons. While 4 acres of pathways/open space have not been included, they are discussed at length in Section 4.

<sup>2</sup> Surplus/Deficit Calculation:

Supply - Demand = Surplus or Deficit (-)

Supply = # park acres presently available (Table 14 provided by MAPD and Wichita Parks Department)

Demand = Population estimate by year (Table 3) x # acres/1,000 persons (playground = 1 acre; neighborhood = 2 acres; community = 3 acres and regional = 5 acres)

Example: To calculate the 2010 Central Subarea regional park need (surplus/deficit)

Supply	572 acres (Table 14)
Demand	176,964 persons x 5 acres/1,000 persons = 884.82 acres (rounded up = 885 acres)
Need	572 - 885 = -312 acres (DEFICIT)

<sup>3</sup> Includes 480 acres at the Sedgwick County Park located in northwest Wichita.

### Wichita Park Land: Current Status

Using the 1994 population estimate of 312,103, the city has 11.25 acres/1,000 population. Based on the proposed standard of 15 acres per 1,000 persons (but using 11 acres for traditional and regional parks, and not including 4 acres of additional open space and pathways), Wichita's long-range Year 2010 park needs are equivalent to approximately 46 neighborhood parks (of an average 10 acres in size with a service distance of ¼ to ½ mile) and 14 community parks (of a minimum 15 acre size with a service distance of 1 to 1 ½ mile).

### County-wide Park Acreage Requirements

Table 17 illustrates existing and future park acreage needs on a county-wide basis using the proposed standard of 15 acres/1,000 persons. Taking Sedgwick County as a whole, current estimates suggest that a small surplus

of 45 acres exists. This is due to an estimated surplus in Wichita of 365 acres. The nineteen small cities face a deficit of 325 acres. The apparent surplus in Wichita is caused by the inclusion of regional park acreage which masks the shortages in playground, neighborhood and community parks. For this analysis, Sedgwick County's Lake Afton Park (720 acres) was evaluated as park acreage serving the county's unincorporated population and Sedgwick County Park (480 acres) was considered as acreage serving Wichita's population due to its location.

In the Year 2010, a county-wide deficit of 558 acres is expected with the greatest deficits faced by Wichita (68 acres) and the small cities (508 acres). The situation is a little different in the rural areas. As described previously, the unincorporated area population in Sedgwick County is expected to decrease due to the expansion of Wichita and the small cities. The standards analysis indicates that the need for park acreage in unincorporated

Table 17  
EXISTING AND FUTURE PARK ACREAGE NEEDS  
(Based on 15 Acres/1,000 Population Standard Applied County-Wide)

	Existing Acreage <sup>1</sup>	1996 Acreage Demand <sup>2</sup>	1996 Acreage Need <sup>3</sup>	2010 Acreage Demand <sup>4</sup>	2010 Acreage Need <sup>5</sup>
Wichita	5,109 <sup>6</sup>	4,744	365	5,177	-68
Small Cities	526	851	-325	1,034	-508
Unincorporated Areas	720	716	4	701	19
TOTAL	6,355	6,310	45	6,912	-558

<sup>1</sup> Existing Acreage is taken from Tables I2 and I4 and from page 22 (for unincorporated).

<sup>2</sup> Acreage Demand is based on 1996 Population of 316,237 x 15 acres/1,000 for Wichita; 56,706 for small cities and 47,728 for unincorporated areas.

<sup>3</sup> Acreage Need a Supply - Demand; e.g., for Wichita; 5,109 - 4,744 = 365 (Surplus). This is net result of all parks including regional ones.

<sup>4</sup> Acreage Demand is based on 2010 Population of 345,162 x 15 acres/1,000 for Wichita; 68,946 for small cities and 46,758 for unincorporated areas.

<sup>5</sup> Year 2010 Need = Supply - Demand; e.g., for the small cities 526 - 1,034 = -508 acres. (Deficit)

<sup>6</sup> Includes 480 acre Sedgwick County Park. 103 acres of bikepath corridors and 878 acres of accessible, useable open space.

areas will decline by 2010. Yet while standards indicate that the unincorporated population is adequately served by park acreage, analysis of the more urbanized unincorporated areas indicates that this may not be the case. Lake Afton Park is the only public park located in an unincorporated area (other than the Sedgwick County Park which, although unincorporated, is surrounded by the City of Wichita). The park's acreage appears to provide for the many unincorporated areas of the county with no nearby park facilities. Therefore when applying standards in the strictest sense, the acreage in regional parks disguises possible needs for park facilities in the small cities and some unincorporated areas of the county.

#### Wichita Area Park Service Analysis

Figures 5 and 6 illustrate general service area boundaries for parks in Wichita, the immediately surrounding small cities, and the unincorporated areas, as of December 1994. Park service areas were based on the maximum distance that park users are reasonably expected to travel to reach desired parks. For instance, playground and neighborhood parks, with smaller sizes and fewer facilities, have a smaller service area radii of one half mile. It should be noted that although community and regional parks serve different functions, such parks were included in the small park service area analysis (Figure 8) using neighborhood service radii, whenever the large parks offered facilities found in small parks. Similarly, some regional parks offer services found in community parks,

and are therefore evaluated equally in the Community Park Service Area Analysis in Figure 6. The park service standards used in this analysis are listed in Section 2.3. In Section 4, a refinement of this analysis is proposed. The refinement will take into account public schools and private parks as potential contributions to the inventory of public recreation sites.

#### Deficit Service Areas

Figure 5 reveals that large areas of Wichita and unincorporated Sedgwick County are not located within 1/2 miles of any park facility. Generally, the deficit areas for neighborhood parks and playgrounds in the Wichita area are in central Wichita, on Wichita's eastern urban fringe and in an area located north and east of Mid-Continent Airport. Although such deficit areas are identified, the means for addressing these areas must take into consideration whether there is, or will be a residential population to be served.

As Figure 6 indicates, Wichita is closer to meeting community park needs than it is to those of neighborhood parks and playgrounds. Areas with a deficiency in community park service are primarily located on the fringe areas of the northwest, northeast, and eastern portions of Wichita. When considering development trends, standards indicate that east Wichita, eastern Sedgwick County, west Wichita, and the Riverview area between Wichita, Park City, and Valley Center, are the primary

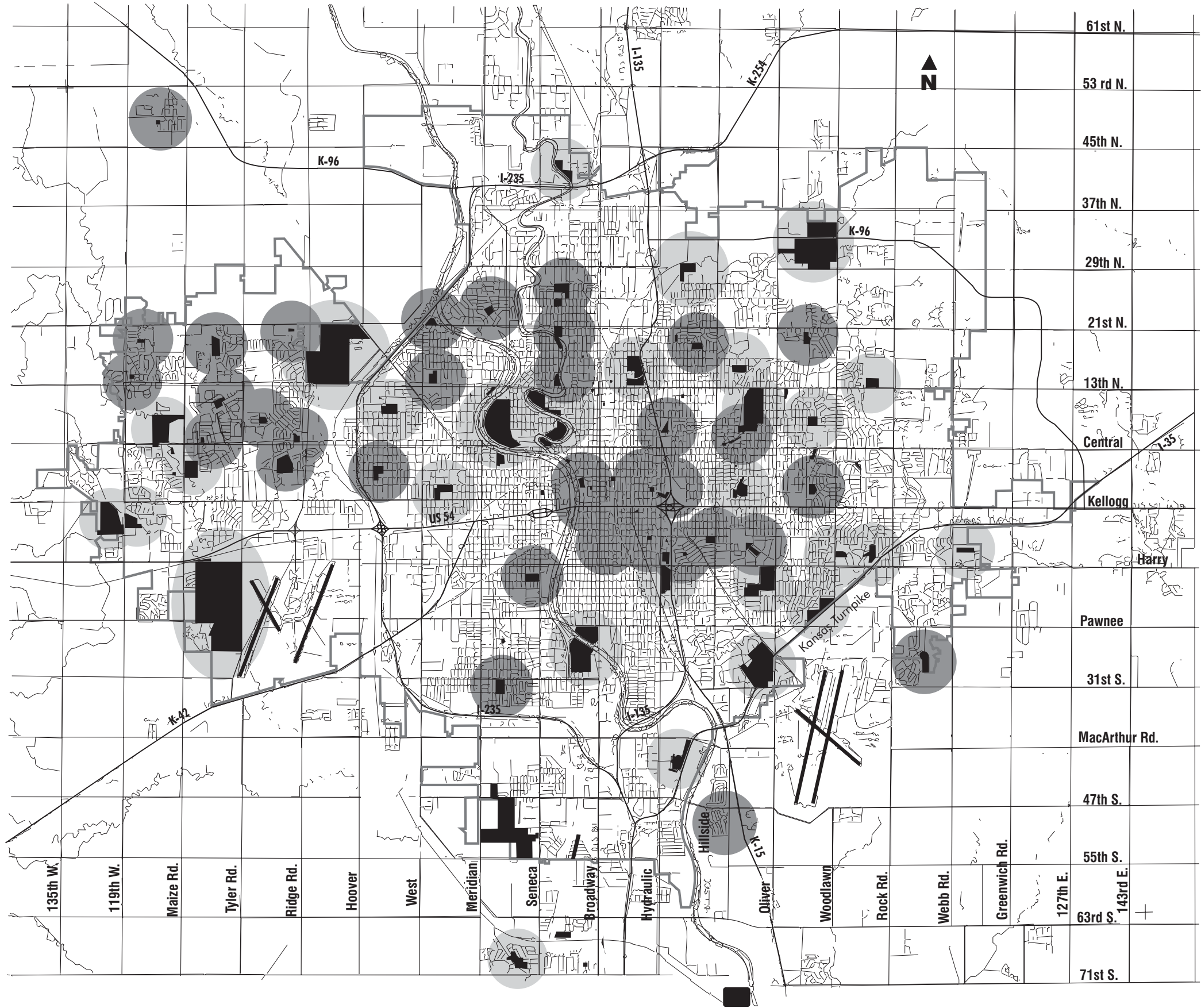


Figure 5

# Wichita Area Small Park Service Areas

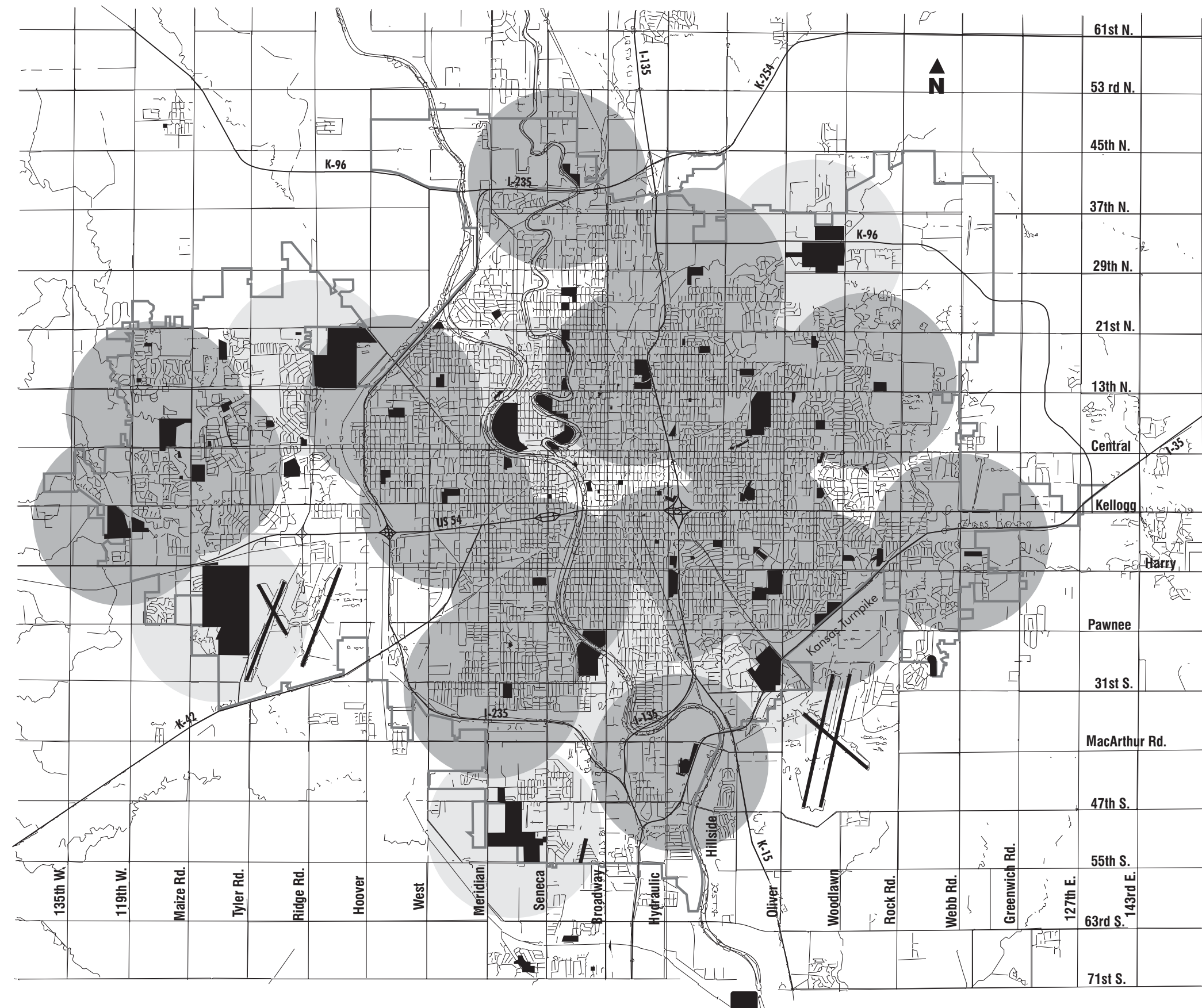
- Community & Regional Parks
- Playground & Neighborhood Parks



Figure 6

# Wichita Area Community Park Service Areas

-  **Community Parks**
-  **Regional Parks**



target areas for new community parks. Eastern Wichita-Sedgwick County currently needs, at least, one regional park (100+ acres).

### Wichita Recreational Facilities Analysis

The Wichita recreation facility analysis is based upon a comparison of existing facilities to national population based standards and standards adopted by five comparable communities. Sixty-three types of facilities were identified and twenty-one of those were evaluated to determine surplus or deficiencies in the provision of various park related facilities.

Traditionally, Wichita has used national standards provided by the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) for evaluation purposes. When the facilities analysis was broadened to include other locally developed standards, a variety of accepted standards were discovered. It should be noted that these standards are goals to be achieved, and in the case of recreational facilities, these goals should be developed at the local level to meet community demand. Furthermore, national standards represent only one measurement of park facility provision -- total numbers -- and do not address quality or location.

Table 18 illustrates Wichita's need for park facilities according to national standards. When national standards did not exist for selected facility types, high and low standards were used from comparable cities. As the table indicates, seventeen of the twenty-one facilities fall into deficit situations. Significant deficits are indicated for the following facility types according to national standards:

- baseball diamonds,
- picnic tables,
- child play areas,
- picnic shelters,
- shuffleboard; and
- tennis courts.

Other recreational facilities which met the lowest comparable city standards, yet have a potential for deficits in Wichita included:

- horseshoe courts,
- recreation/craft buildings; and
- soccer fields.

Other areas where the standards may, in fact, be met through a combination of private and public facilities in-

clude swimming pools and golf courses. The standards comparisons indicate the need for one additional pool and two additional 18 hole golf courses. However, private swimming pools located at country clubs, swim clubs and health clubs could resolve the pool deficit. When including the four private golf courses at Willowbend, Rolling Hills, Reflection Ridge, and Wichita State University, a surplus of three golf courses is found for the community as a whole. While city wide totals for selected recreation facilities may be adequate when considering private facilities, the ability for persons of all income levels to join private facilities or clubs must be considered as well. Fortunately, many areas of Wichita experiencing facility deficits (the east, northeast, and west) are also higher income areas of the community, whose residents have a greater capacity to join private recreational clubs.

### Subarea Analysis

Table 19 illustrates surplus and deficiency levels for selected high usage facilities by subarea, according to national standards. Using the most conservative standards, all city subareas had deficits in major facility types at the end of 1992. As Table 19 illustrates Wichita's only major recreation facility surplus was for soccer fields, with the city having a surplus of ten such fields. All areas of the city appear to have adequate levels of golf courses according to national standards except for the central subarea which was short one golf course. Regarding child play areas, all subareas had a substantial deficit. The largest play area deficit was located in Wichita's central area; a shortage of 140 such facilities according to the standards. Overall, the **central** area had the largest recreational facility deficiencies in nearly all categories. The north subarea also had noteworthy deficiencies at the end of 1996, since the area was **served** by only two parks, with no recreational facilities other than a 0.5 mile nature trail at Hellers Park.

### LAND AND FACILITY NEEDS AS DEFINED BY CITIZEN DEMAND

Recognizing citizen demand for parks and recreation is an important element of the park planning process. It is important because it allows for more effective and efficient use of public resources, based on demand for facility use. Citizen demand analysis is an approach that determines the following:

- What citizens desire for parks and recreational facilities;
- Which parks and recreation activities citizens use most; and



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Table 18  
WICHITA PARK FACILITY REQUIREMENTS  
By National Population Based Standards <sup>1</sup>

Facility Type	NRPA Standard	Number of Existing Public Facilities	Demand	Surplus/Deficit (-)
Baseball Diamond	115,000	6	63	-58
Bridle Trail	1 Mile/6,250	13 Miles	50	-38
Child's Play Area	1/300 <sup>2</sup> , 1/1,000 <sup>2</sup>	58	1,054, 316	-996, -258
<b>Craft/Recreation</b> Building	1/15,000 <sup>2</sup> , 1/35,000 <sup>2</sup>	10	21, 9	-11, 1
Exercise Trail	1 Trail/7,500 <sup>2</sup>	8 Trails	42	-34
Football Field	1/20,000	2	16	-14
Golf course (18 Hole)	1/50,000	4	6	-2
Handball Court	1/20,000	4	16	-12
Horseshoe Court	112,000 <sup>2</sup> , 1/7,500 <sup>2</sup>	52	158, 42	-106, 10
Multi-Use Court	1/5,500	38	57	-19
Picnic Shelter	112,000 <sup>2</sup>	25	158	-133
Shuffle Board	112,000 <sup>2</sup> , 117,500 <sup>2</sup>	34	158, 42	-124, -8
Soccer Field	114,000 <sup>2</sup> , 1/20,000 <sup>2</sup>	24	79, 16	-55, 8
Softball Diamonds	1/5,000	45	63	-18
Swimming Pools	1120,000	14	16	-2
Tennis Courts	112,000	80	158	-78
Trails (Hike, Bike, Pedestrian)	1 Mile/3,000 <sup>2</sup>	16 Miles	105	-89
Volleyball Courts	115,000	40	63	-23

<sup>1</sup> As of December 1992; 1996 estimated population of 316,237 was used.

<sup>2</sup> A NRPA standard does not exist. A standard from a comparative city was utilized.

Table 19  
MAJOR RECREATIONAL FACILITY NEEDS BY CITY SUBAREA BASED UPON NRPA STANDARDS <sup>1</sup>

S = Supply D = Demand N = Need	Central			East			North			Northeast			South			West		
	S	D	N	S	D	N	S	D	N	S	D	N	S	D	N	S	D	N
Baseball Diamond	6	37	-31	0	4	-4	0	1	-1	0	5	-5	0	6	-6	0	10	-10
Child's Play Area <sup>2</sup>	44	184	-140	1	22	-21	0	7	-7	2	26	-24	3	30	-27	7	48	-40
Exercise Trail	6	25	-19	2	3	-1	0	1	-1	0	3	-3	0	4	-4	0	6	-6
Multi-Use Courts	29	34	-5	0	4	-4	0	1	-1	1	5	-4	2	5	-3	5	9	-4
Soccer Fields <sup>2</sup>	12	9	3	0	1	-1	0	0	0	3	1	2	7	1	6	2	2	0
Softball Diamonds	31	37	-6	1	4	-3	0	1	-1	5	5	0	2	6	-4	6	10	-4
Swimming Pools	10	9	1	0	1	-1	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	2	2	0
Tennis Courts	62	92	-30	2	11	-9	0	4	-4	4	13	-9	6	15	-9	5	24	-19

<sup>1</sup> Using 1996 MAPD subarea population estimates

<sup>2</sup> A comparable city standard with the lowest number of required facilities was used: Child's Play Area: 1/1,000; Exercise Trail: 1/7,500; Soccer Fields: 1/20,000.

•Which facilities and services citizens want in the future.

While national standards are useful for determining general indicators of need, the standards are intended to serve only as a target. Due to different needs in all communities, and even differences in smaller geographic areas within a community, a precise standards formula cannot be applied across the board. Therefore, as a method of determining local preferences in recreational priorities in Wichita, a community citizen survey was completed in 1992 to provide insight about park and recreation priorities.

Table 20 illustrates community survey results when citizens were asked to rank the most important investments for park and recreation facilities. When considering all responses for investment preferences, the respondents' investment priorities showed the highest support (in terms of percentage response) for maintenance and security, and for neighborhood and community parks and their typical recreation facilities. When asked about their willingness to pay additional taxes for improved services in these same areas, the rankings were similar, with nature trails rated higher and maintenance somewhat

lower. Not unexpectedly, only a small percentage of citizens indicated that they would be willing to pay additional taxes for park services. However, many of these citizens probably assumed, when asked about additional taxes, that some economies could be found in existing budgets to fund additional services.

#### Survey Responses to Additional Park Land

Table 21 lists respondent's support for new parks according to park size. Survey results indicate that citizens are more than twice as likely to support additional neighborhood park development as opposed to larger parks. The survey also found that neighborhood parks are the most utilized public park and recreation facility in Wichita.

The popularity of small parks is likely due to the close proximity of neighborhood parks to the citizens being served, in effect, creating a greater sense of ownership and identity with nearby facilities. Use of larger community parks in Wichita is likely reserved for special occasions for most households, while neighborhood parks are used more frequently, for spontaneous events and relaxation. The value of proximity or access was an

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Table 20  
MOST IMPORTANT PARK AND RECREATION INVESTMENTS

Type of Investment	Most Important Change in Investment	Rank	Willing to Pay Additional Taxes	Rank
Bike Paths	9%	5	15%	5
Maintenance	16%	2	13%	6
Nature Trails	8%	6	19%	2
Neighborhood Parks	13%	3	16%	4
Riverbank Development	12%	4	18%	3
Security	26%	1	23%	1
Other Investments*	16%	--	--	--
TOTAL	100%			

\*Includes community parks, sports fields, basketball courts, picnic facilities, tennis courts, swimming pools, recreation centers and floodway access.

Table 21  
WICHITA PARK AND RECREATION  
CITIZEN SURVEY

Park Type	Need More	No Chg	Need Fewer
Large Community Parks	23.6%	71.1%	5.3%
Neighborhood Parks	54.5%	43.9%	1.6%

important issue among the respondents, with almost 23 percent indicating that they would be more likely to increase use of park and recreation facilities if parks were closer.

### Survey Responses on Recreation Facilities

While Table 20 illustrates the priority that citizens placed on park and recreation investments, Table 22 illustrates the results when citizens were asked about support for increasing investment in key recreation facility types. Overall, the respondents primarily supported further recreation facility investment in bicycle paths and picnic facilities. This demand **confirms** the standards analysis which indicates that Wichita has a deficit of at least 88 miles of trails (includes hiking, biking, and jogging trails) and 129 picnic shelters.

However, as also indicated by Table 22, local demand for recreation facilities does not necessarily coincide with national standards for all types of facilities. NRPA standards indicate that Wichita is under-served by facilities such as tennis courts, swimming pools, outdoor basketball courts, sports fields, and recreation centers. While the standards indicate need for additional tennis courts, only 18 percent of the community survey respondents expressed a need for increased investment. In addition, there appears to be little demand for increased basketball court and sports field development. The survey found that over 84 percent of the respondents had not used a basketball court facility in the last 12 months, with 62 percent giving the same response for sports fields. However, respondents did express desire for an indoor sports and fitness complex. Yet, demand for such a facility was location specific, with citizen support dependent upon living close to it.

According to the table, 34 percent support increased investment for public swimming pools, although the pools were not necessarily used by the average citizen. Survey respondents expressed strong support for continued operation of the pools, especially, if the facilities were altered to include family activity areas. Public pools gained additional support when integrated into a broader recreational complex.

**Table 22**  
**SUPPORT FOR INCREASED INVESTMENT**  
**IN KEY RECREATION FACILITIES**

Facility	Percent of Respondents Supporting Increased Investment
Bicycle Paths	51.2%
Picnic Facilities	40%
Indoor Rec. Centers	37%
Swimming Pools	34%
Sports Fields	25%
Basketball Courts	21%
Tennis Courts	18%

#### Survey Responses on Maintenance and Security

Some of the most important investments for Wichita area citizens, according to the park and recreation survey, are protecting the investments already in place. As Table 23 indicates, increased investment in security and maintenance of park and recreation facilities were supported by the majority of the citizens polled. Finding the appropriate balance between new investments and maintenance of current assets is critical to effective service delivery. Failure to allocate resources to maintain park and recreation facilities can act as a **barrier** to facility usage. This fact is illustrated by the survey, which found that over 20 percent of the respondents would be more likely to use existing park and recreation facilities if they were better maintained. The concern for park maintenance is likely centered around the need for capital maintenance (such as upgrading restrooms, repairing cracked tennis courts) rather than a concern about operational maintenance (such as mowing schedules and personnel).

The greatest psychological barrier to park and recreational facility use in Wichita is related to fear of crime. When asked how to solve the crime perception, almost 39 percent of the citizens surveyed indicated that they would use recreational facilities more if additional security lighting was added, and almost 43 percent indicated that additional security police were important. Crime and the perception of criminal activity are becoming one of

**Table 23**  
**SUPPORT FOR INCREASED INVESTMENT**  
**IN SECURITY AND MAINTENANCE**

Investment Type	Percent of Respondents Supporting Increased Investment
Security	74%
Maintenance	51%

the most important "quality of life" issues facing the nation today. As Table 23 indicates, fear of crime is an important factor in usage of Wichita's park system; nearly three-fourths of the citizens surveyed (74 percent) support additional investment in park security.

The issues of maintenance and security are two points of concern for park and recreation facility usage. With 26 percent of the citizen respondents indicating that security was the most important investment for Wichita's park system. Without action to visibly safeguard parks, recreational opportunities will suffer. It is of little value to invest in new or enhanced park and recreation facilities if **barriers** exist that limit a citizen's willingness to use the facilities.

#### **PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

Along with the findings outlined previously, it is important to note the planning considerations identified through the planning process which led to the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan in June 1993. These considerations reiterate several items pointed out by the standards and citizen demand analysis above, as well as items concerning landscape and visual enhancements in public areas.

- The acquisition of additional park land should be focused upon reducing existing land deficits and placing parks in strategic locations to meet the demands of population growth. In addition to meeting deficits based on standards, it is important that the open space system and associated recreational facility development address **locational** and public needs. Assessing these needs involves an understanding of park use and recreation trends in the community through direct public input, as well as an understanding of growth and development trends and land use patterns.

## THE NEED

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- **Future** acquisition or public access of land may require a variety of funding resources, including public-private partnerships, to supplement existing tax sources.

- **Much** open space is available in the form of drainageways for use in a **greenway/parks** system. Accessibility to and acquisition of areas such as the "Big Ditch" or old railroad lines are major items of **concern**. These land assets can provide linkages between park land and other activity centers, providing a valuable **alternative** for transportation and recreation throughout the community.

- **Areas** that provide habitat for wildlife, including streams, wetlands, surface water, and significant areas of woodland, should be actively protected. These can serve as community and regional resources which enhance the unique qualities of the area and provide new recreational opportunities for the community.

- **The** Wichita park system, as well as other community systems and the County system, serves residents in a regional area, and protected open space areas extend beyond municipal boundaries. These factors influence the consideration of creating a county-wide or regional system which can actively acquire and utilize resources within a larger area, thus providing **rural** and urban recreational opportunities to a growing population, as well as enhancing the capability of acquiring park land prior to urban development.

- Potential recreation and wildlife habitat areas have been lost to development in the past throughout Sedgwick County and especially along the stream systems in Wichita. Enhancing and protecting these remaining areas will provide additional recreational amenities.

- \*Approximately 14 protected animal species are known to reside in or migrate through Sedgwick County. Most of these species rely on habitats along watercourses, drainageways, and near wetlands, lakes, and ponds. These habitats should be comprehensively identified and protected in order to preserve the supportive environment available in **Sedgwick** County.

In addition to the previous considerations, the Park Master Plan must be sensitive to further demographic

changes and trends which impact the delivery of public park services. On a national basis these trends include:

- Providing a wide range of facilities for a diverse population. The nation's population is not only aging, but it is becoming more racially diverse. This may require the design of public spaces to appeal to groups who retain interest in their own cultural heritage.

- Providing for an older population that will remain active. According to the Census Bureau, the number of Americans over 65 years of age will increase from 11.2 percent of the population in 1980 to 20 percent of the population by 2030.

- \*Providing facilities closer to home at an affordable price. It is anticipated that as the national economy shifts to service-based employment, more jobs will be part-time, with less pay and fewer benefits. Those persons with only a moderate amount of income to spend on recreation will increase. Parks will need to be close to where children are raised and adults work.

- Designing and building new facilities for much lower maintenance. As funding becomes more difficult, it may be necessary to limit maintenance to the most visible areas, resulting in a less-manicured appearance. However, a positive result may be more healthy ecosystems.

- Providing for an increased interest in the educational and environmental components of recreation.

To an extent, Wichita-Sedgwick County has already been impacted, and will continue to be impacted by these national trends. Over the last decade, the area's population continued to age, diversify racially, and it **experienced** a large growth in the number of single parent families. As service sector jobs become a larger portion of Wichita-Sedgwick County's employment base, greater emphasis will be placed on local recreation programs, facilities, and recreation centers which provide services to neighborhoods and communities in need of low-cost entertainment and activities. In the future, it will be important to monitor local demographic changes and target park and recreation services to those areas and citizens of the community with the greatest need.

## THE FUTURE

*"Play for the child, sport for the youth and recreation for adults are essentials of normal life; it is generally recognized that the creation and maintenance of outdoor recreation facilities is a community duty in order that the whole public might participate in their enjoyment."*

CALVIN COOLIDGE





The plan's preceding discussion focused on park planning and management efforts. It concentrated on both descriptive and quantitative analyses of our existing park systems. While data collection and inquiry are important steps in the process of preparing a plan, the heart of the plan lies in its vision for the future and the recommendations for achieving that vision.

In this section, action strategies and priorities for a viable future park and recreation system are outlined. The objective is to produce a coordinated, **useable**, and affordable park system for Wichita and Sedgwick County. This section presents recommendations considered vital for the success of this plan. To provide background for these recommendations, examples are presented to show how other **midwest** communities are meeting the needs of their citizens. In this plan, a common sense approach, which takes into account current social and economic conditions, has been used to produce a pragmatic plan. Yet, to simply dream and propose ideas is not enough. There must be a strong willingness to succeed -- a commitment! There must be a desire to do what is necessary for success to occur.

### THE VISION

Parks and Pathways is intended to provide a far-reaching and exciting glimpse into the future public park and recreation system of Sedgwick County. The plan reaches beyond basic physical park planning to explore implementation ideas designed to resolve old problems. It is more than a call to acquire and develop park sites; it is a call for a comprehensively managed approach with emphasis on administration, finance, maintenance and security.

In addition to land acquisition, the plan envisions a reduction (preferably, the elimination) of current park land deficiencies throughout the county. However, it is recognized that existing acreage and facility shortages in inner city, urban areas pose significant challenges due to the "built up" nature of these areas. It is simply more difficult, and more expensive to locate and acquire park land in developed areas.

The future park and recreation system must include more than the City of Wichita. It must extend beyond traditional political jurisdiction boundaries and reach out to meet the needs of all residents -- be they urban or rural. The system will require a high level of coordination between existing park facilities and future land acquisition. It will require a variety of recreation activities and a greater commitment to maintenance.

Public recreation programs that reflect the changing needs of both children and adults in a growing community must continue to be developed. Historically, recreation programming for children has been driven by social concerns. Free playgrounds and community recreation centers were initially developed in the 1920's and 30's to provide safe, supervised and affordable recreation for children of working parents. Wichita recreation programs today, sixty years later, still address the needs of "latch-key" children, where no parent or adult is at home to supervise children's activities after school. These free "latch-key" programs, developed and offered in cooperation with public schools, churches and community youth organizations, provide a safe haven for unsupervised youth.

After-school playgrounds, open recreation centers, athletic team sports and similar recreation programs are likely to remain the mainstay of public recreation programming in Wichita in the next ten years, even though the delivery of these programs may change drastically. Because of declining resources available for recreation programs, future years are likely to bring with them the need for an accelerated effort to reduce programming duplication within the community. Cooperative efforts and alliances with other community recreation providers will enable the Park Department to identify areas of need and efficiently deliver those necessary programs.

Seasonal athletic programs, like football, soccer, softball and basketball provide a healthy recreation outlet for youth that benefits the entire community. Parents continue to express a desire for the park system to provide more of the facilities needed for these sports programs. Parks and Recreation in Wichita will continue to seek innovative ways to ensure that adequate athletic facilities are available, either through development or cooperative use of school and private sector facilities.

The **Department** of Park and Recreation has, in the past few years, developed close working relationships with Wichita's Unified School District #259 and various other adjacent school districts in order to share facilities to provide recreation programs. An example is an agreement between the City of Wichita and Wichita Board of Education, allowing the Park Department to develop a school site no longer in use (Martin School) as a City park for the benefit of neighboring residents. In addition, the Wichita Board of Education and the City of Wichita are working together in a "Lighted School Program" that will allow recreation and community activities to occur after regular school hours at public school facilities. It is the intent of the Department of Park and Recreation to **con-**



## THE FUTURE

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tinue to work closely with school systems to identify all available athletic field facilities, city-owned and school-owned, and develop an efficient system for scheduling team and league play on those fields to better serve the needs of the community.

Providing adequate recreation programs and facilities within the community will require a greater understanding of park use patterns. Surveys administered periodically to area citizens and to other recreation providers in the community are tools that will enable the Park and Recreation Department to more closely identify community needs and efficiently target scarce community resources.

Our future open space system extends beyond physical recreation alone. It also recognizes the value of open space as a significant contributor to the quality of people's lives across Sedgwick County. Expanding the public's awareness and acceptance of the value of open space, whether public or private is an inherent part of this plan.

Equally important to land acquisition and facility construction is the maintenance of parks. We must not allow significant public and private investments for park facilities and aesthetic enhancements to be depreciated by decay and lack of care. Poor maintenance creates a negative image of the city and county if residents and visitors are left with an impression that the public either can not or will not care for its built and natural environment. Adequate maintenance funding must be budgeted for both new and existing facilities. However, in the future, cost saving efforts such as community involvement programs should be promoted to enhance park maintenance and security. These efforts range from planting and caring for landscaping in parks and along roadways, to forming neighborhood and community citizen partnerships such as Midtown's "Park Protector" program.

Also, more than ever, the public is concerned with issues of safety and security in parks. In some instances, citizens have abandoned outings to parks for the comfort and security of home while others only venture out to special events when larger crowds are present. For many, crime, both actual and perceived; poses a significant barrier to park enjoyment.

But, security issues and crime go well beyond the boundaries of parks. Crime is an issue that must be addressed at all levels, and in all areas of the community. Without such an effort, crime perceptions will persist. If citizens fear criminal acts at a community wide level, they will avoid park outings, even if the actual threat of crime

in parks is relatively small. Public investment strategies should focus upon enhanced night time lighting and additional security patrols for parks in high crime areas. Also, new parks should be designed and incorporated into nearby residential areas to create a sense of ownership for area residents. With proper training and supervision neighborhood watch programs and citizen patrols can be expanded to aid in park policing. Through community involvement, many of the safety concerns centered around crime in parks may be reduced, if not eliminated.

This vision includes an extensive network of linkages (pathways) between various geographic points of interest. For example, foot and bicycle paths can link community activity centers such as schools, museums, shopping areas and parks. Likewise, little appreciated drainageways throughout the county can be transformed into ribbons of natural and scenic beauty to complement their natural functions, that is, they can become useful, enjoyable pathways, which offer both active and passive recreation functions.

Newer developments in Sedgwick County, especially in the growth areas on Wichita's west, east and northeast peripheries, offer the opportunity for improved subdivision design and amenities. Future development in these areas should enhance and preserve natural features, and create pathways within Wichita, the small cities, and the unincorporated portions of the county. These efforts, in conjunction with beautification efforts along major arterial roadways, can create aesthetically pleasing transportation corridors, and enhance our community's visual image.

In economic hard times, those agencies providing leisure services are often hard pressed to meet the demand for such services. They often face reduced operating budgets, delayed public capital improvement expenditures, and escalating costs. However, despite the lack of available funding for current recreational needs, the public continues to demand park and recreation facilities. According to an article in U.S. News and World Report, entitled "Americans Play, Even with Economy in Spin," Americans are pinching pennies on essential items so that they can spend more money on amusements and recreation. The article notes:

***"Recession or not, Americans are reluctant to cut back on their fun and on the spending they put into it."***

To meet future demand, park development efforts should include a diversified funding approach. Common methods used to achieve this revenue mix include: spe-

cial fees and taxes, grants, corporate giving and voluntary land dedication and fee-in-lieu contributions by developers. Parks and Pathways proposes the further investigation of shifting a portion of the general taxpayer's responsibility to some of these other funding and land acquisition methods by increasing the role of contributions by developers and philanthropic associations, and by increasing the level of corporate gift giving and donations. On the public side the City and County should work to maximize the joint use of school properties, investigate and incorporate the use of private open space in determining service deficits, and actively seek out land and monetary donations and grants.

It is by these recommended means that the legacy of the park and open space system in Wichita and Sedgwick County can be preserved. Today's parks must not become problem areas to be passed on to a future generation's care and attention. Indeed, it is the goal of this plan, despite current **financial** limitations, to nurture our remaining fragile natural resources and our existing public parks. Only by doing so will our future park, recreation, and open space system be well-cared for and flourish with people and activity.

### GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Vision is essential to any long range planning effort. A visionary outlook, however, must always be balanced with a practical and **realistic** approach in order to have a workable plan. This portion of Parks and Pathways is, in reality, the call for action. The general recommendations are presented as a set of goals, objectives, and strategies achieving each of the plan's key priorities.

A goal is defined as a desired end state -- an ideal situation toward which we strive. Since goals represent broad ideals, one cannot expect all goals to always or easily be met. Therefore, goals are broken down into workable components *i.e.*, objectives and strategies. Objectives are defined to be more specific statements which refine goal statements into positions to be pursued to meet the desired end. Strategies are the action steps recommended to implement objectives. Both objectives and strategies are to be considered the recommendations of the plan.

The recommendations of Parks and Pathways are based upon the issues and policies addressed by the Wichita-Sedgwick County Comprehensive Plan, as well as the previous sections of this document. The Comprehensive Plan serves as the City and County's umbrella policy planning document, **of which** park planning is one

component. The goals, objectives, and strategies recommended are intended to be specific, prioritized recommendations to implement the vision created by both the Comprehensive Plan and this plan. This vision is displayed in the Park System Map. The map serves as the system wide **visual** guide for the implementation of the plan.

### PURPOSE STATEMENT

***ENHANCE THE QUALITY OF LIFE AND THE IMAGE OF WICHITA AND SEDGWICK COUNTY THROUGH THE PROVISION OF ACCESSIBLE, SAFE, WELL MAINTAINED, AND STRATEGICALLY LOCATED PUBLIC PARKS AND OPEN SPACES.***

***GOAL 1: IMPROVE ACCESSIBILITY AND USE OF PARKS, RECREATIONAL FACILITIES AND OPEN SPACE RESOURCES BY REMOVING BARRIERS TO PUBLIC USE.***

**OBJECTIVE 1A:** Design new parks and maintain new and existing parks so that crime and poor maintenance are not barriers to use.

### STRATEGIES

(a) Implement a policy to assure that security and maintenance of existing parks and recreational facilities are foremost priorities.

(b) Improve safety in new and existing parks through increased police (or contracted security) and citizen safety patrols, increased night time lighting in high crime areas, and improved maintenance.

(c) Make ADA required and necessary capital projects and modifications to park facilities.

(d) Locate public open spaces in new subdivisions so that residents living near parks have a sense of responsibility for ensuring their safety and maintenance.

(e) Increase citizen participation in the selection and placement of **equipment/facilities** in neighborhood parks.

(f) Develop an Adopt-a-Park program that encourages private organizations and neighborhood groups to aid in park maintenance and to join in park safety efforts.

(g) In new parks, site buildings to avoid vulnerability and isolation of users.

## THE FUTURE

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### ***COAL 2: PROVIDE ADEQUATE PARKLAND, OPEN SPACE, RECREATION FACILITIES, AND PROGRAMS TO MEET THE NEEDS OF THE CURRENT AND FUTURE RESIDENTS OF WICHITA AND SEDGWICK COUNTY.***

**OBJECTIVE 2A:** Implement a park system Master Plan to guide all park and open space planning decisions.

#### STRATEGIES

(a) Structure Wichita and Sedgwick County Capital Improvement Program (CIP) proposals to follow the intent of the Master Plan's strategies and ensure an equitable distribution of parks and recreation facilities.

(b) Reevaluate the Master Plan's goals and accomplishments annually and the land standards every two years.

(c) Update the Master Plan every ten years.

**OBJECTIVE 2B:** Adopt a facilities development approach that targets existing deficit areas in a strategic manner and provides facilities for new growth areas.

#### STRATEGIES

(a) In urban residential areas, ensure accessible playground, neighborhood, **and/or** community parks within each square mile for every citizen; meet land standards before park land can be sold.

(b) Prioritize park development in neighborhoods with few or no facilities, and neighborhoods with high use and demand for parks and recreational facilities.

(c) Develop playgrounds and small neighborhood parks in urban areas through joint facility use, development, and maintenance agreements with school districts.

(d) Determine actual park and recreational needs and usage patterns in neighborhoods and regions with community wide surveys.

(e) Evaluate potential park **and recreational** facility acquisitions on the basis of use, capital cost, operations and maintenance costs, accessibility, need, resource preservation, unique features, aesthetics, and compliance with the Park and Open Space Master Plan.

(f) Develop small playgrounds in existing urban ar-

reas where it is difficult to assemble parcels of land for larger parks.

(g) Pursue private development of major recreation facilities (i.e., tennis, soccer, or softball complexes) in larger public parks.

(h) In developing areas, incorporate playground activities and facilities into recreation corridors and other larger parks with enhanced access via pathways.

(i) Use partnerships between the City of Wichita/Sedgwick County and developers to create more neighborhood park land and park facilities in developing areas of the City and County. Such partnerships should contain provisions whereby developers are provided incentives to dedicate parks and make improvements for public use.

**OBJECTIVE 2C:** Adopt a proactive approach for land acquisition in which park lands are acquired in advance of development and existing deficits are strategically addressed.

#### STRATEGIES

(a) Adopt a park and open space acreage standard of 15 acres/1,000 persons in Wichita and its urban growth areas. (1 acre of playgrounds; 2 acres of neighborhood parks; 3 acres of community parks; 5 acres of regional parks; and 4 acres of public open space, linear parks and pathways)

(b) Work with the County to increase its role in providing regional parks and pathways.

(c) Adopt an early land acquisition approach for **future** neighborhood, community and regional parks in areas where new development is expected as generally outlined in the Wichita-Sedgwick County Comprehensive Plan.

- 29th St. North & Greenwich Rd.
- 13th & Grove
- 13th St. North & Webb Rd.
- 13th St. North & 143rd St. East
- 127th St. East & Harry
- Maple & 167th St. West
- Central St. & 151st St. West
- 21st St. North & 135th St. West
- **Pracht** Lake Wetland at Maize Rd. & 21st St. North

- Meridian Ave & 53rd St. North
- 79th St. South & the Arkansas River
- Oaklawn (upgrade & maintain)
- Riverview area: Between NW Wichita and Park City
- Sand pits, where feasible

(d) Acquire lands for linear parks or pathways as part of the development process through voluntary land dedication.

**OBJECTIVE 2D:** Provide recreation programs that reflect current and changing trends according to citizen demand.

### STRATEGIES

(a) Use citizen surveys and staff observations to evaluate citizen use of existing facilities and programs.

(b) Conduct citizen surveys to gauge interest in new programs and facilities.

(c) Use Citizen Participation Organization (CPO) representatives and non-profit recreation organizations to obtain input for recreation programs.

(d) Utilize input from private recreation providers to help with the planning of future facilities.

### ***GOAL 3: COORDINATE PARK AND OPEN SPACE SYSTEM MANAGEMENT IN WICHITA, THE SMALL CITIES AND SEDGWICK COUNTY.***

**OBJECTIVE 3A:** Investigate the use of a county-wide organizational structure for the efficient and effective delivery of park and recreational services.

### STRATEGIES

(a) Continue to coordinate joint educational and recreational programming with area school districts.

(b) Implement cooperative agreements with area school districts to utilize facilities during non-school hours and develop a "credit system" for developers who provide equivalent private park and recreation facilities in new subdivisions.

(c) Develop joint public school and public park sites in urban areas.

(d) Expand the County's role in the provision of regional parks and pathways or create a park district for Sedgwick County to provide efficient and coordinated park land acquisition and recreational programs and operations throughout the county.

**OBJECTIVE 3B:** Establish diverse and reliable funding sources for park land acquisition, facility development, maintenance, and security.

### STRATEGIES

(a) Provide budgetary support for adequate maintenance for existing and future park facilities; establish a full time position for a staff person to generate such new revenues.

(b) Pursue alternative revenue sources to fund acquisition and development of parks using corporate gifts, grants, and cooperative agreements with the private sector.

(c) Prepare a Financial Strategy to implement a combination of funding sources for land acquisition and facility development (e.g., special sales tax, mill levy increase, special assessments, and partnerships to increase land donations). Secure legislation as necessary.

(d) Encourage decision makers to budget for adequate funding to ensure a higher level of maintenance, adequate development of existing parks, and the success of new partnerships.

(e) Pursue state legislation for the creation of special park assessment taxing districts to develop and maintain smaller parks for developments located in unincorporated portions of the county.

(f) Pursue state legislation to allow the creation of urban area districts which could, through special taxes, provide higher levels of public services (including parks) to unincorporated, but urbanizing areas.

### ***GOAL 4: PROTECT AND PRESERVE THE NATURAL RESOURCES WHICH ADD TO THE COMMUNITY'S QUALITY OF LIFE AND CREATE A UNIQUE LIVING ENVIRONMENT.***

**OBJECTIVE 4A:** Encourage the retention of natural resources and incorporate them into the design of parks and residential areas.

# THE FUTURE

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## STRATEGIES

(a) Preserve Pracht Wetland (Cadillac Lake) near northwest of Wichita as a regional park. Incorporate only nonconsumptive activities such as hiking and nature study to maximize the educational potential of the site.

(b) Research the cost of mapping and inventorying the county's natural resources (e.g., vegetation, water resources, wildlife habitat, and wetlands) and define a program to protect and ensure proper development.

(c) Prepare an Arkansas River Master Plan for recreational use of the river corridor through Sedgwick County.

(d) Promote the conservation of identified environmentally-sensitive areas by the use of direct purchase, voluntary land dedication or preservation within privately maintained reserves.

(e) Obtain, through purchase easements, voluntary dedication or donation or preserve within private reserves, land in and along floodways and floodplains in developing areas of the county for parks.

(f) Acquire or create lands with significant water or natural landscape features for park and recreation corridor development, including sand pits.

(g) Prepare a comprehensive urban forestry plan and develop a computer program to track and maintain an inventory of trees.

(h) Promote the preservation of existing stands of trees and other native vegetation through educational programs, and develop a viable subdivision review process and development criteria.

(i) Reevaluate the use of a dam on the Arkansas River for greater water depths between Lincoln Steet and Watson Park.

### **GOAL 5: ENHANCE THE CITY AND COUNTY'S VISUAL APPEARANCE**

**OBJECTIVE 5A:** Continue to review public capital projects to ensure visual enhancement of public buildings, rights-of-way, utilities and other public spaces.

## STRATEGIES

(a) Complete land use planning studies in conjunction with the Comprehensive Plan for new growth areas,

and include parks and open spaces as buffers between incompatible land uses.

(b) Develop and adopt arterial street design and landscaping standards.

(c) Coordinate activities between roadway and utility planning entities and park and recreation providers.

(d) Prepare detailed design plans to enhance the visual appearance of key districts and corridors in the community as identified by the Visual Form Map in the Comprehensive Plan.

(e) Develop for approval new design review requirements for high visibility land developments and for major gateways into urban areas.

(f) Enhance the visual image of the community through closer attention to the design and manner of placement of elements along major streets, including public and private signage, tree planting, utility poles, wires and cabinets, and other street furniture.

(g) Encourage the design and construction of a visually prominent landmark as a unifying symbol for Wichita and Sedgwick County.

(h) Maintain a guide for tourists and residents which identifies existing public art and open space attractions throughout the county.

**OBJECTIVE 5B:** Incorporate landscaping and forestry to enhance the area's visual appearance and image.

## STRATEGIES

(a) Expand the street tree planting program along arterial streets. Develop partnerships with property owners and neighborhood associations in planting trees in neighborhoods.

(b) Preserve hedge rows and tree-lined streets.

(c) Continue public/private beautification efforts such as the "Trees for Neighborhoods" program.

(d) Incorporate xeriscape (drought resistant plants) in all public areas.

(e) Investigate alternative, cost efficient methods to irrigate park and golf facilities and to provide drainage control.

(f) Expand floral display beds in public parks and at public building sites. Expand and upgrade shrub beds to encourage natural landscaping and conservation.

(g) Create light, water and sound enhancements along the Wichita **riverfront** parks; add lighted fountains for the holiday season to A. Price Woodward, **Finley Ross**, **Heritage** and **Naftzger** parks.

**GOAL 6: ESTABLISH A NETWORK OF LINEAR PARKS AND RECREATION CORRIDORS TO IMPROVE PROXIMITY AND ACCESSIBILITY TO PARKS AND TO ACTIVITY CENTERS.**

**OBJECTIVE 6A:** Develop a coordinated system of linear park, bikeway, greenway, and pedestrian corridors which link people to residential, commercial, recreational, educational and other public activity centers throughout Sedgwick County.

### STRATEGIES

(a) Complete a comprehensive study of the **Wichita-Valley Center Flood Control Greenway** as a potential multi-purpose community resource which includes recreation and the preservation of sensitive wildlife habitat areas within portions of the Greenway.

(b) Obtain public access easements and use river corridors, drainageways, existing and abandoned utility and railroad rights-of-way (such as the Midland Valley Railroad), where feasible, for hiking, bicycling, trail riding, canoeing and greenways.

(c) Connect the existing bicycle paths to provide an interconnected system of bicycle trails throughout the urbanized area.

(d) Include accommodations for pathway development as identified in the Park Future System Map as part of public roadway projects.

(e) Complete the highest priority bicycle trails:

- K-96:** Wichita east city limits to Oliver St. (Wichita)  
=GypsumCreek: Cessna Park to the Turnpike (Wichita)  
\*Arkansas River: Meridian to Seneca (Wichita)
- K-96:** Oliver St. to Grove Park (Wichita)  
-Arkansas River: 13th to Meridian (Wichita)
- 21st:** Ridge Road to Maize Road (Wichita)

(f) Acquire, through purchase agreements or voluntary donations, additional rights-of-way along roads identified in the Future System Map.

(g) Acquire, through purchase agreements or voluntary donations, additional right-of-way, if necessary, for shoulders suitable for bicyclists along rural arterial recreation corridors..

(g) Connect public pedestrian, equestrian and bicycle trails through parks, along streets, along drainageways and utility easements, and through or in conjunction with established open space reserves.

(h) Obtain public access agreements to utilize select private reserves and open space for the development of pathways where feasible.

(i) Monitor the availability of railroad rights-of-way and utility **corridors** and, when feasible, aggressively pursue the acquisition of such corridors for recreation.

### KEY ACTIONS

Table 24 lists the key actions that are necessary for the successful implementation of this Plan. These actions are based upon:

- An analysis of acreage and locational needs for park and open space lands,
- The responses to the citizens' survey,
- The missions of the Wichita Park Department and the Board of County Commissioners; and
- The general recommendations provided in the Goals, Objectives, and Strategies.

### RECOMMENDED ACTION #1: Establish Service Standards

In order to meet future demand, this plan supports the Wichita Park Board's recommendation to increase the City's minimum park standard **from 11 acres/1000 residents to 15 acres/1000 residents**. This standard is more than the 13 acre average standard for eight comparable cities **surveyed**, but remains significantly lower than that of nearby Johnson County, Kansas (28 **acres/per** 1,000 persons), Kansas City, Missouri (22 **acres/per** 1,000 persons), and the actual level of service provided by the comparable cities (25 **acres/per** 1,000 persons).

The 15 acre standard would provide 1 acre for playgrounds, 2 acres for neighborhood parks, 3 acres for **com-**

Table 24  
KEY PARK PLANNING ACTIONS

Actions
1. Establish Service Standards: Adopt a standard of 15 acres/1,000 persons in Wichita and its urban growth areas for parks and pathways. Establish higher levels of security and maintenance for parks.
2. Develop Revenue Sources: Develop a financial plan to raise sufficient revenues to meet the needs of the existing and future populations.
3. Expand the County's Role: Expand the county's mission for park service, with appropriate funding and organizational structure.
4. Create a <b>Pathway</b> System: Establish a county-wide network of linear parks and pathways,

munity parks, and 5 acres for regional parks per 1,000 persons respectively, as well as 4 acres/1,000 for open space and pathways. Smaller municipalities are encouraged to develop individual standards for park land development in their own jurisdictions. Each city would be responsible for developing pathways within its jurisdiction.

The fact that there are existing areas of deficiency in Wichita (even with the 11 acres/1,000 population standard in place) does not invalidate the raising of the standard and the desire to evaluate the quality of life vis-a-vis parks. There will continue to be shifts of population in the older areas of the city and these areas will be given special attention to ensure adequate land and facilities for the resident population. The inclusion of some school facilities and private facilities will help reduce deficits. On the other hand, the growth areas will be served well by the provision of additional open space using the new standards.

### Future Community Parks

The Park System Map illustrates the proposed sites for 12 future community or larger parks (at least 15 acres in size) to serve Wichita and its surrounding urban growth areas by 2010. Eight of these sites were identified by the 1993 Wichita-Sedgwick County Comprehensive Plan. Two sites identified in this master plan are intended to serve unincorporated areas.

It is recommended that the City of Wichita acquire land and develop the 10 community parks located in the city's future growth areas (primarily west and east). In addition, two community parks, located in Oaklawn and

the Riverview area (between Wichita, Park City, and Valley Center), could be developed, by special taxing districts or by joint participation agreements between nearby communities and Sedgwick County.

### Future Regional Parks

Regional parks serve different purposes than do smaller, local parks. They offer residents a greater number of facilities if the parks are developed as recreational complexes, like Sedgwick County Park. Conversely, they may also offer opportunities for the preservation of significant or noteworthy areas in a natural state.

For active recreation interests, the economies of scale can be more evident by the grouping of different facilities and equipment in one setting to provide less maintenance costs. For passive recreational pursuits in scenic or more natural areas, a park site needs to be of a size large enough to offer nature study and observation opportunities, areas for separation of noisier activities from quiet ones and enough land to truly provide for protection of natural resources. Hence, the regional park size. Despite the use of a traditional standard analysis, regional parks are recognized as very popular in Sedgwick County and will continue to attract many users. Therefore, the plan recommends that additional regional parks be included as part of the longer term implementation plan.

### Maintenance and Security

In addition to standards of quantity, the quality factor is very much a concern in the Wichita metropolitan area. Properly maintained and secure parks are very important to park users. This recommended action for new

levels of service also places high priority on keeping parks attractive to users by caring for their appearances and by discouraging anti-social activities. Maintenance and security, as addressed in the park survey, ranked high in importance. The priorities for the strategies reflect this concern. Costs for maintenance are included later in the plan in order to realistically evaluate the impact of the plan.

### School District Cooperation

In addition to land acquisition efforts, joint cooperative efforts between park providers and school districts should be utilized to address playground and neighborhood park needs in existing urban areas. These agreements could include provisions for hours of use, maintenance arrangements, and facility development on school grounds. Although not formally available throughout the day, many of the school grounds and outdoor facilities are used by residents. By pursuing use agreements and joint efforts, development and maintenance costs could be reduced for both public parks and playgrounds to serve the general public and school children.

### RECOMMENDED ACTION #2: Develop Revenue Sources

During the course of this plan's preparation, it became obvious that the traditional funding measures of general fund revenues (property taxes), user fees and grants were not generating sufficient funds to face existing, let alone future needs. Under the general fund approach, often, those city services perceived to be more directly beneficial, such as police and roads, receive higher priority in lean times.

In all likelihood, the required funding for the plan will continue to rely on one or more traditional funding sources, such as the property tax, or on a sales tax. However, to minimize the general tax payers' contributions, other funds from locally under-utilized (and non-utilized) sources should be used. More diversified funding sources will allow the city to escape further serious reductions in funding for park land acquisition, development and maintenance. These additional funds are not meant to replace existing revenues, but to enhance them, perhaps even reduce slightly, and be a more equitable distribution of the responsibilities for payment.

Under-utilized sources include grants, donations and corporate contributions. A full time individual is needed to focus solely on acquiring funds and land through these avenues. With other duties to handle, the present staff of

the Wichita Park and Recreation Department is unable to devote enough time to these potentially **revenue-enhancing** activities.

Non-utilized sources are those used in other areas of the country but not yet in use here. In addition, locally there have been some excellent examples of partnerships with developers of new subdivisions, through which land and facilities have been obtained at no or reduced cost to the public. However, more of these should be encouraged. As noted above, a full time staff position is needed to explore and implement new funding techniques.

### Need for a Long Term Financial Plan

In order for the mechanics of new funding sources to be worked out thoroughly with the appropriate **stakeholders**, it is recommended that the adoption of this plan be followed immediately with the preparation of a long term financial plan. The preparation of this financial plan should be done expeditiously to avoid unnecessary plan implementation delays and should be done through a balanced group of citizen, park personnel and business representatives.

### Other Potential Revenue Sources

Other revenue sources are possible. However, it will take a concentrated effort to **carry out** the implementation of new programs. This plan recommends that other revenue sources be used to supplement property tax revenues. Furthermore the plan recommends a staff position devoted to marketing and revenue enhancement activities be created to actively pursue donations, grants, and other revenue sources including the following:

### Public-Private Partnerships

In recent years, there has been a growing interest for better maintained and more secure parks in the Wichita metropolitan area. This has been fostered by evidence of some parks being in need of improvements, both in terms of facilities and maintenance. Due to the limited resources of the governing bodies here, as well as in many parts of the nation, there are just not enough public funds to keep up current levels of maintenance and security, let alone improve service levels.

A **substantial** number of newer residential subdivisions have been developed with open space "reserves" that are owned and maintained by homeowner associations. It should be recognized that these areas, to a greater or lesser extent, can substitute for neighborhood parks



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that have been traditionally provided by local government. Giving this phenomenon formal recognition requires a new concept in evaluating park standards. In Wichita's case, neighborhood parks may not need to be developed where private open space is providing an adequate substitute. This can free up public funds to meet other pressing park and recreation priorities. These new privately developed parks can be termed "neighborhood subdivision parks" which provide some recreation opportunities but may not include all the amenities generally found in a standard "neighborhood park".

In some cases, however, local **government** may still wish to see neighborhood level open space available to the general public. One of the ways to accomplish this is through encouraging the use of partnerships. These arrangements, whereby the private sector works with the public sector to accomplish a civic objective, can be very rewarding. For new parks and open space, developers and government can negotiate individualized partnerships with a menu of incentives available to encourage developers to negotiate.

Specific operational details will be developed over time and each individual agreement may vary, but the consideration of partnerships should include such options as:

1. Developer contribution of land in return for commitment from the city or county to provide certain improvements within an agreed-upon period of time. If the improvements are not provided within the specified time period, the land could revert back to the developer to be used for private open space.
2. Developer designation of land in return for a commitment from the City or County to purchase land and make certain improvements within an agreed-upon period of time. If the improvements were not provided within the specified time period, the developer would have the option of buying back the **land** at the price at which it was sold for use as private open space.
3. Developer designation of land, with some improvements. Ownership is private and some degree of public **access/usage** of the land is allowed.
4. Developer designation of land with improvements but ownership remains private and access is restricted to residents who live in the area.

Partnerships are not limited to neighborhood parks.

They may be applicable for larger parks and special facilities also. Furthermore, partnerships will continue to exist between public agencies, such as between local and federal governments.

Finally, the use of public-private partnerships is not seen as a panacea to meeting all neighborhood park needs. This process for new growth areas, however, is worth exploring and putting into effect. Should expectations not be realized, i.e., few or no partnerships are created, then reliance on traditional and new funding sources will be made.

### User Fees

Another source of revenue may include increased user charges and fees, or the establishment of new fees to finance increased park maintenance and park facility needs. Such user charges and fees can provide a source of income to meet operating expenses, especially for expensive facilities such as swimming pools and programs offered at recreation centers which must be subsidized to maintain operation.

Currently, the Wichita Park Department is working to centralize recreation facilities into multi-court (field) complexes such as tennis centers and **softball/baseball** centers. These sports complexes help control costs by concentrating management and maintenance activities in one area, and also offer opportunities to provide a higher level of service which can be recouped by user fees. Such fees in single court (field) neighborhood facilities are not a likely source for increased revenue in the future because costs for staffing and collecting fees would be much higher than any revenues generated. New facility charges and fees should be pursued with some caution, since increased user fees would impact the low income population to the greatest degree and possibly reduce accessibility to such facilities.

### Special Tax Levy

Many communities use a method of acquiring and funding open space development by a special tax on particular goods and services. In most cases, these taxes, typically **nonproperty** taxes, require special legislation before they can be collected and used for specific purposes. The advantage of a special tax levy is that once it has been established, it can provide a dependable source of funding. Examples of such taxes used in other cities, and to a limited extent in Wichita and Sedgwick County, include seat taxes on cultural attractions, hotel-motel lodging taxes, **payroll/income** taxes, sales taxes, liquor taxes, and services taxes. The one special tax levy with the greatest potential for implementing the park and open space master plan is the sales tax, discussed in greater detail below.

## EXAMPLE: Sales Tax

The county-wide sales tax is a potential funding source for park and recreational purposes. For instance, a 1/8 cent increase in the sales tax would likely generate over \$4 million annually. The advantage of funding park and recreation activities with a sales tax (or another special tax levy) is a reduced reliance upon property taxes, and the ability to collect revenue from citizens who reside in other locations.

A sales tax on retail sales devoted to parks and recreation is one method that could contribute substantially to Wichita and Sedgwick County's park finding. The advantage of establishing a special sales tax for parks is the likelihood of realizing an assured level of funding on an annual basis, although such a source of finding will tend to fluctuate more than a dedicated mill levy. Table 25 illustrates the potential that could be generated in Sedgwick County if the sales tax rate were to be increased. Although retail sales tend to fluctuate, statistics show that Sedgwick County's annual retail sales have increased yearly from 1982 to 1994, except for a slight dip in 1986.

Currently, a one percent (1%) tax is levied on gross retail sales in Sedgwick County, in addition to the 4.9 percent tax levied by the State of Kansas. The one percent (1%) tax, which was approved by voters in July 1985, is split between Wichita and Sedgwick County with the City receiving 60 percent and the County receiving 40 percent of the revenue generated. In 1991, Wichita's share of the sales tax revenue was approximately \$22 million, with the revenue being split equally between the general fund and the City's street and highway program.

The current one percent (1%) tax levied throughout Sedgwick County is the maximum level allowed by State law. Therefore, state legislation and a county-wide referendum would be necessary to increase the sales tax rate to fund park development. For a tax referendum to be successful, it would be beneficial to identify specific high profile park projects, which would be completed as a result of, and/or use part of the tax to reduce property taxes, as was done for the Kellogg highway referendum in 1985.

Boulder, Colorado was among the first communities in the nation to establish an open space program to preserve its natural landscape and create a more livable urban environment. The intent of the program, as directed by the Boulder Valley Comprehensive Plan and the Open Space Board of Trustees, is to acquire and maintain property for passive use and enjoyment, and to ensure the continued agricultural nature of areas which historically have been used for ranches or farms. The reasons that Boulder residents developed the Open Space Program were to protect the environment, limit growth, maintain the quality of life, and increase recreational areas.

Between 1967 and 1992, the city spent about \$78 million to preserve 22,700 acres of open space land in the program's 25 years of existence. In order to find the aggressive open space program, the citizens of Boulder voted in 1967 to increase the sales tax rate by one percent, 40 percent of which was earmarked for the acquisition, maintenance and protection of Open Space lands. In 1989, an additional 0.33 percent sales tax was passed to increase the rate of preservation through the year 2004. The total 0.73 percent tax is projected to raise about \$11.4 million in 1993. Other revenue sources supplement the tax revenues resulting in an approximate budget of \$13.7 million in 1993. About 30 percent of Boulder's park and open space budget is used for operations, leaving 70 percent for buying additional land.

**Table 25**  
**POTENTIAL REVENUE GENERATED BY AN ADDITIONAL SALES TAX IN SEDGWICK COUNTY**

Year	Yearly Retail Sales	Revenue from an Additional 118% Sales Tax	Revenue from an Additional 114% Sales Tax	Revenue from an Additional 112% Sales Tax	Revenue from an Additional 1% Sales Tax
1993	4,136,800,000	5,171,000	10,342,000	20,684,000	41,368,000
1994	4,297,800,000	5,372,250	10,744,500	21,489,000	42,987,000

Source: WSU Center for Economic Development and Business Research

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### Special Park Taxing Districts

Short of setting up a special, new county-wide park district, the County could consider establishing smaller taxing districts to finance park and open space improvements in a certain neighborhood, subdivision, or district. Typically, these districts are used to fund improvements associated with streets, curbs, sidewalks, sewers, and other infrastructure improvements. State legislation may be needed to create such special taxing districts for park development and maintenance. To establish parks with attendant facilities only, the County's home rule powers may be sufficient.

### Grants from State and Federal Agencies

During the 1960's and 1970's, local governments turned to state and federal governments for financial assistance in funding park projects. However, during the 1980's, virtually all funding from state and federal sources ended and, in many cases, complete elimination of programs resulted. One federal source that continues to be used sparingly for park purposes is the Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG).

#### *EXAMPLE: Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG)*

The Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG) was established in 1974 to allow cities and counties to establish their own priorities for tackling urban problems. The intent of the CDBG program is to support local governments in their efforts to solve problems associated with urban blight, low and moderate income groups, and historic preservation. In 1993, Wichita received \$315,000 in CDBG money for projects associated with the Grove Park expansion and the La Familia Multicultural Center. While the CDBG funding represented 3 percent of the City's 1993 Park budget, CDBG is a funding source that has not been used extensively for park projects in the past. However, local projects seeking funding must compete with other projects, and requested funding often exceeds available funds by margin of 2, 3, or more, to 1.

#### *EXAMPLE: Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA)*

In 1991, the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA), was signed into law. This Act was devised to establish a new vision for

surface transportation in America. ISTEA is a six year program intended to create new jobs, reduce congestion, rebuild infrastructure, and address environmental issues. The State of Kansas is scheduled to receive a total of approximately \$1.3 billion for Federal Fiscal Years 1992-1997. This funding will be shared between the Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT) and cities and counties.

The provisions of ISTEA give more flexibility in determining transportation solutions, new technologies, and the pursuit of alternative modes of transportation. Under the Act, highway funds are available for transportation related activities that enhance the environment such as bicycle and pedestrian trails, wetland banking, mitigation of damaged wildlife habitats, historic site preservation, air quality improvement projects, and highway beautification.

The ISTEA program utilizes federal funds that contribute up to 80 percent of a capital project, with 20 percent required from local contributions. KDOT administers the Kansas appropriation and grants funding on an application basis. Approximately \$5-6 million is set aside annually for "enhancement" projects statewide. In 1993, as part of an award for 1992-94 funding, Wichita received \$328,000 for the Gypsum Creek bike path in the southeast portion of the city.

### The "Parks that pay for themselves" Concept

The "parks that pay for themselves" concept is a method of designing and planning parks to include park-related, but privately developed and operated facilities, that generate revenues. It arose as a reaction to difficult times with public financing for parks. In this concept, part of the revenues that these facilities earn are used to pay for park land and the facilities which are located jointly on site. According to the Urban Land Institute (ULI), developing parks with commercial uses allows cities to develop new park facilities that, in many instances, would not have otherwise been economically viable. Cities can form partnerships with private businesses, each with its own resources to create a mutual benefit for both parties.

By incorporating business concepts into a park environment, these sites become **attractive** to businesses that prosper due to their location within or adjacent to open space and athletic activities. Businesses such as **tennis**

clubs, health spas, training facilities for amateur or professional organizations or universities, swim clubs, marinas, restaurants, and conference centers have been used by other cities to help finance new public parks. Typically, these businesses guarantee the city a flat rate annual fee or a percentage of their gross annual revenues, which in turn is used for park maintenance or development.

The key to a successful park is to include commercial uses that are park related yet scattered to allow the park's natural character to remain intact. Typically, these parks are developed under some **type** of commercial recreational zoning. However, the land on which the businesses are constructed remains permanently in public ownership. An example of such a use is the Wolman outdoor ice-skating rink and the Tavern-on-the-Green restaurant in New York City's Central Park. The facilities not only generate revenues for themselves and the City, but they draw people to the park as well. Although it is not likely that such developments in the Wichita area could generate enough revenue to finance an entire park, it is likely that the concept could be used to defray some costs for specialized facilities such as tennis complexes or ice skating rinks.

### Corporate Giving

Private sector donations can substantially assist local park and recreation programs. Public-private programs such as the "Adopt-a-Park program" and "The 5 Percent Club" are two examples of business and industry contributing to local programs. The "Adopt-a-Park program" offers businesses, civic groups, and individuals the opportunity to take maintenance **and/or** funding responsibility for local parks. Such a program can help local park departments significantly in the costs associated with day-to-day maintenance of park facilities. "The 5 Percent Club" is a concept that originated in the Minneapolis-St. Paul Metropolitan Area that encourages corporate gifts for park and recreation purposes. "The Club" uses an Internal Revenue Service **rule** permitting up to a 5 percent write-off for corporate gifts given to charitable, educational, and community services.

### Grants from Foundations/Philanthropic Associations

Excellent sources of financial assistance for park and recreation programs are grants from foundations and philanthropic organizations. Presently, several local foundations and companies provide funding for causes related to education, welfare, health, science, humanities and religion. Wichita-Sedgwick County is the home to a large

number of non-profit foundations, many of which were established by the City's major corporations such as Koch Industries, Beech Aircraft, Cessna Aircraft, and Coleman Industries. These large foundations offer great potential for park and recreation projects. Assistance can also come from philanthropic associations. The "Wichita Park Alliance" is an example of a local group that has purchased land and donated it to the city for park purposes. Finally, the use of national land holding trusts, such as the Nature Conservancy, or even a local trust are additional vehicles by which to obtain assistance with land acquisition.

### RECOMMENDED ACTION #3: Expanded County Role

To be most effective, a park system must meet a variety of necessary responsibilities. For Wichita and Sedgwick County this includes the ability to coordinate and acquire large natural resource areas, acquire land for new parks, hold any lands dedicated or park development fees until park development is required, and deliver park and recreation services to all Sedgwick County residents. The City and County must be able to deal more effectively with:

- **Increased** urbanization of the county's unincorporated areas which are not served by public park and recreation facilities.

- =Lowercost advanced land acquisition beyond current municipal boundaries.

- \*Coordination of land acquisition and development of parks and recreation throughout the county in recognition of regional use patterns.

- \*Protection for residents from natural hazards through minimal alteration of the county's floodplains, wetlands and other natural resource areas.

In the past, Sedgwick County's role has been to fund and maintain several special use facilities that benefit the residents of the entire county (and the region); this role should continue. However, to meet the needs of a growing Sedgwick County, several regional parks and pathways are recommended. The County needs to be involved in the land acquisition, development and maintenance of these facilities which will benefit all residents of the County.

### Three New Parks

In order to meet existing and future recreation needs

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in the eastern part of the County and to protect significant natural resource areas in Sedgwick County, it is recommended that 3 new parks be established by the year 2010. These parks (of a large community or regional size) will offer the opportunity for more cost effective operations and maintenance while providing specialized and concentrated facilities in and around Wichita. One of the parks should include ball diamonds and soccer fields, hiking and riding trails and special purpose fields. These larger park complexes and their recreational facilities can be sited and maintained more efficiently on one larger site than be scattered about. One park should be located in eastern Sedgwick County. The other two parks should be natural areas of lower maintenance cost.

These three larger parks, illustrated in the Park System Map (Figure 7), are in east Wichita/eastern Sedgwick County due to an existing and future concentration of people in this area; the Pracht Wetland near northwest Wichita (approximately 260 acres); and at the confluence of the Big Arkansas River and the Wichita-Valley Center Flood Control Channel between Derby and Haysville.

Both the Pracht Wetland and the Big Arkansas River/Wichita-Valley Center Flood Channel sites are significant environmental resource areas and should be protected from future urbanization. Any one or all of these future park sites may be acquired and developed by joint participation agreements between Sedgwick County and nearby communities, or by direct land donations and other private fund raising efforts.

### County Park Management Options

To carry out the expanded roles and responsibilities, the County could find it advantageous to establish a county park department or could work with the City of Wichita to set up a joint city-county arrangement. However, it would also be instructive to undertake an analysis of the advantages/disadvantages of having one park department or park agency for Sedgwick County. The County, in any case is still encouraged to participate in the acquisition and development of the three recommended regional park and recreation complexes.

Another option to getting expanded park services county-wide is through an independent park district or authority. The advantages are that they provide more directed focus on park services, and, because they do not compete for funding with other departments, have a more predictable budget for planning future services.

A district may be set up basically in two ways. One

would be in a manner similar to what was used in Johnson County, Kansas. There, the County Commission appoints members and sets the budget and levies. The Johnson County Park District is discussed in greater detail in the following subsection. The other manner is through an independent governing body with individually elected Park Board members. In that case, new state legislation would be needed to allow for the establishment of such a district.

The district could be county-wide and restricted to regional park services, plus delivery of local services on a contracted basis, as is the case for Johnson County. Park districts generally serve a congruous geographic area, rather than being restricted by political jurisdictional boundaries. The ability to function as a district can provide advantages to park planning and implementation such as improved coordination, defined purpose, and clear accountability. In Kansas, a park district can include several counties. Currently, Johnson County has the only park district in the state, which was created by the Kansas Legislature in 1953.

### The Johnson County Park and Recreation District

In 1953, the Kansas Legislature created the Shawnee Mission Park District with the primary responsibility to acquire park lands for the rapidly growing population residing in the northeastern portion of Johnson County, Kansas. In 1967, the District was expanded to include the entire county, and at the same time the district also initiated recreation services for its citizens. With its expanded role and geographic area, the District was renamed the Johnson County Park and Recreation District.

The general role and philosophy of the Johnson County Park and Recreation District is to coordinate and acquire large natural resource-base parks and stream corridor areas (stream way parks), and provide recreational services throughout the county. The purpose and objectives of the Park and Recreation District are:

- To establish, improve, manage, finance, operate, and maintain County parks;
- To provide for public safety within the District's parks; and
- To provide for the operation, management, financing, and supervision of county recreational programs.

The Johnson County Park and Recreation District serves as an independent agency of Johnson County. The

Johnson County Park District Board of Commissioners has seven members, five of which are appointed by the Johnson County Commissioners, the remaining two are appointed by the County Commissioners from the community at-large. Board members serve three year terms and receive no compensation for the performance of their duties. The annual budget for the District must gain approval from the County. Funding for the District is through a combination of a dedicated mill levy and a recreation Enterprise Fund, as well as various other grants and donations. As of the end of 1993, a 2 mill ad valorem tax levy covered administrative costs, land acquisition for stream way parks, improvements to existing and undeveloped park properties, and support for the outdoor theater. It also allows the District to meet the per capita standard for providing park space, and to support operating costs of the existing park system.

Recreational programming in the District is funded by an Enterprise Fund supported by user fees. The District provides recreational activities to all residents of Johnson County, except for those communities which choose to provide activities within their jurisdictions. District activities consist of approximately 2,000 individual programs which represent over 850,000 annual recreational participation. In addition, the Enterprise Fund includes three revenue bond financing ventures for football, soccer, and golf facilities wherein the participants are charged fees, which not only provide for the annual interest and principal bond payments but provide fee support for the facility operation and maintenance.

While the District acquires land and develops regional parks and stream way parks throughout Johnson County, the individual communities within the county provide and fund the small neighborhood parks within their jurisdictions. The District occasionally contributes to small park development as well. Overall, the park acres/population standard adopted for the Johnson County Park and Recreation District is 28 acres per 1,000 persons. Of this standard, 20 acres are devoted to regional or resource areas and 8 acres are devoted to stream way linear parks. The District's standard is in addition to the standards adopted by local public jurisdictions for small parks.

### **RECOMMENDED ACTION #4: Create a County-wide Pathway and Open Space System**

Pathways are considered linear strips of land designed to connect parks, nature areas and, even, developed areas. On a larger scale, the pathway system is intended to link various areas of Wichita, the small cities, and unin-

corporated urban areas in Sedgwick County. This type of network, which is accessible to the general public, will support multiple recreation pursuits (e.g., bicycling, hiking, equestrian trail riding, and pedestrian activities). As characterized in the Wichita-Sedgwick County Comprehensive Plan, approximately 150 miles of recreation corridors are identified for Wichita and 250 miles of regional recreation corridors in the unincorporated portions of Sedgwick County. However, for the plan's horizon (Year 2010), a target of 50 miles is proposed for the Wichita metropolitan area. For future expansion beyond the plan's horizon, the Future Pathways System Map (Figure 8) does show additional pathways.

The alignments for these pathways, shown on the Park System Map, follow drainageways, hedge rows, and utility, railroad, and roadway right-of-ways. Pathways may be used as walking/hiking trails, nature trails, bikeways, or equestrian trails. They differ from linear parks in that linear parks are officially named parks in the Wichita park land inventory. Although not illustrated on the Park System Map, future linear parks may be incorporated within new subdivisions and include many playground, neighborhood park, and recreation corridor functions. The idea is to connect a variety of public and private open spaces. However, no corridors will be established in designated areas without the involvement and consideration of the concerns of the property owners directly impacted by the pathway.

Currently, Wichita has identified five bike trails in its CIP for development and Sedgwick County has completed a bike trail along the Northeast Expressway (K-96) in eastern Sedgwick County and along Zoo Blvd. and within Sedgwick County Park in northwest Wichita. Future land acquisition, drainage, and roadway improvement projects could incorporate segments of the pathway system as a part of right-of-way acquisition and/or project construction.

Another potential for linear park/recreation corridor development includes dedication of land or easements bordering drainageways by subdivision developers or property owners. However, over the years, Wichita and Sedgwick County have pursued implicit policies which have generally discouraged the dedication of private land to the public, and placed these areas in private reserves in order to reduce maintenance responsibilities.

The development of the linear park/pathway system will increase accessibility, connect existing parks and special use facilities, and help protect man-made and natu-

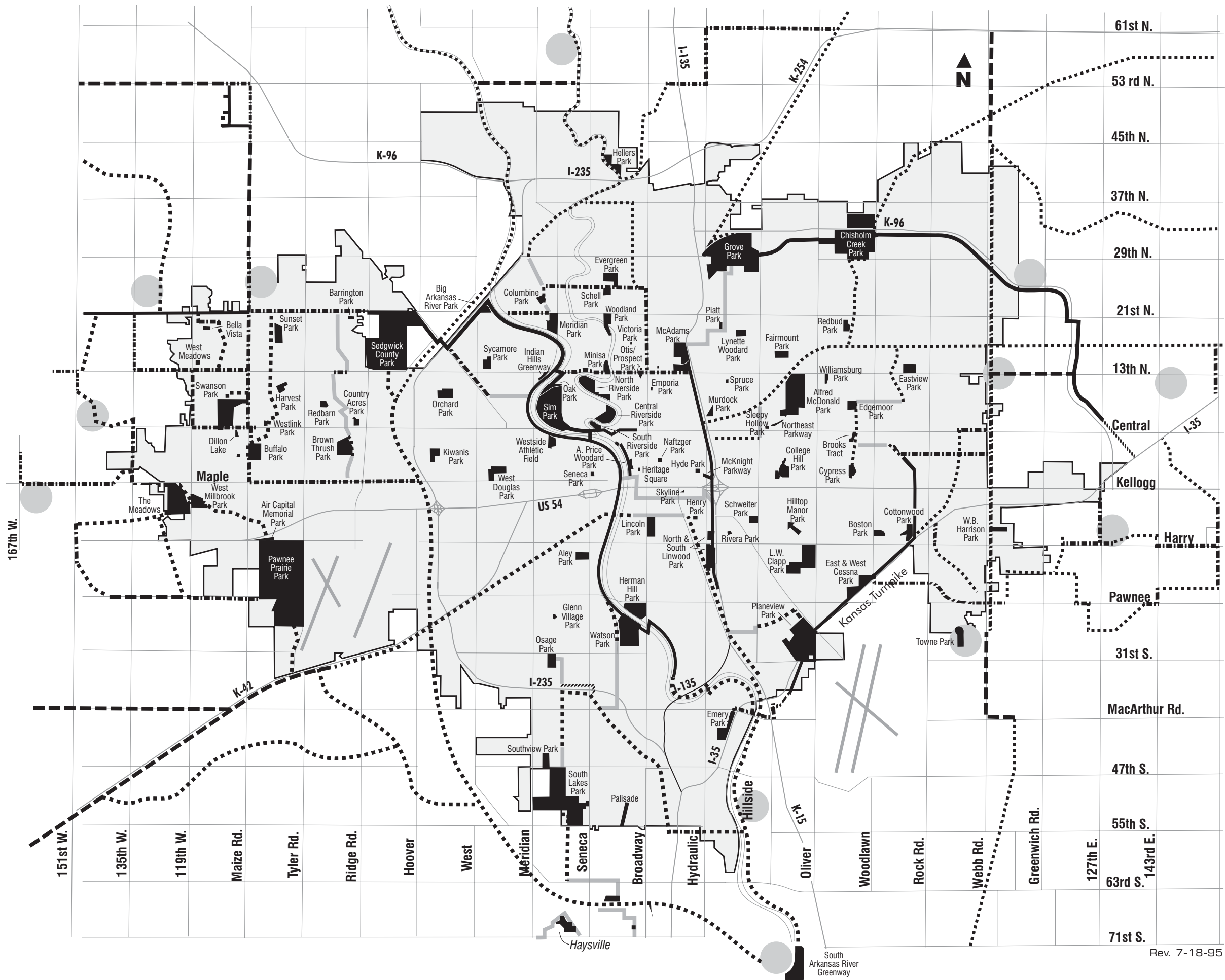


Figure 7

# Wichita Metropolitan Area Future System Map

## Legend

- Existing Pathways (Recreation Corridors)** —————
- Proposed Pathways:**
  - Greenway** ..... (dotted line)
  - Parkway** -.-.-.-.- (dash-dot line)
  - Rural Arterial** - - - - - (dashed line)
  - Urban Arterial** - . - . - . (long-dashed line)
  - On-Street Route** ——— (solid line)
  - Potential Future Park Sites** ● (grey circle)

**Note:** Due to space limitations, this map does not show all On-Street Bike Routes. For these, please refer to the



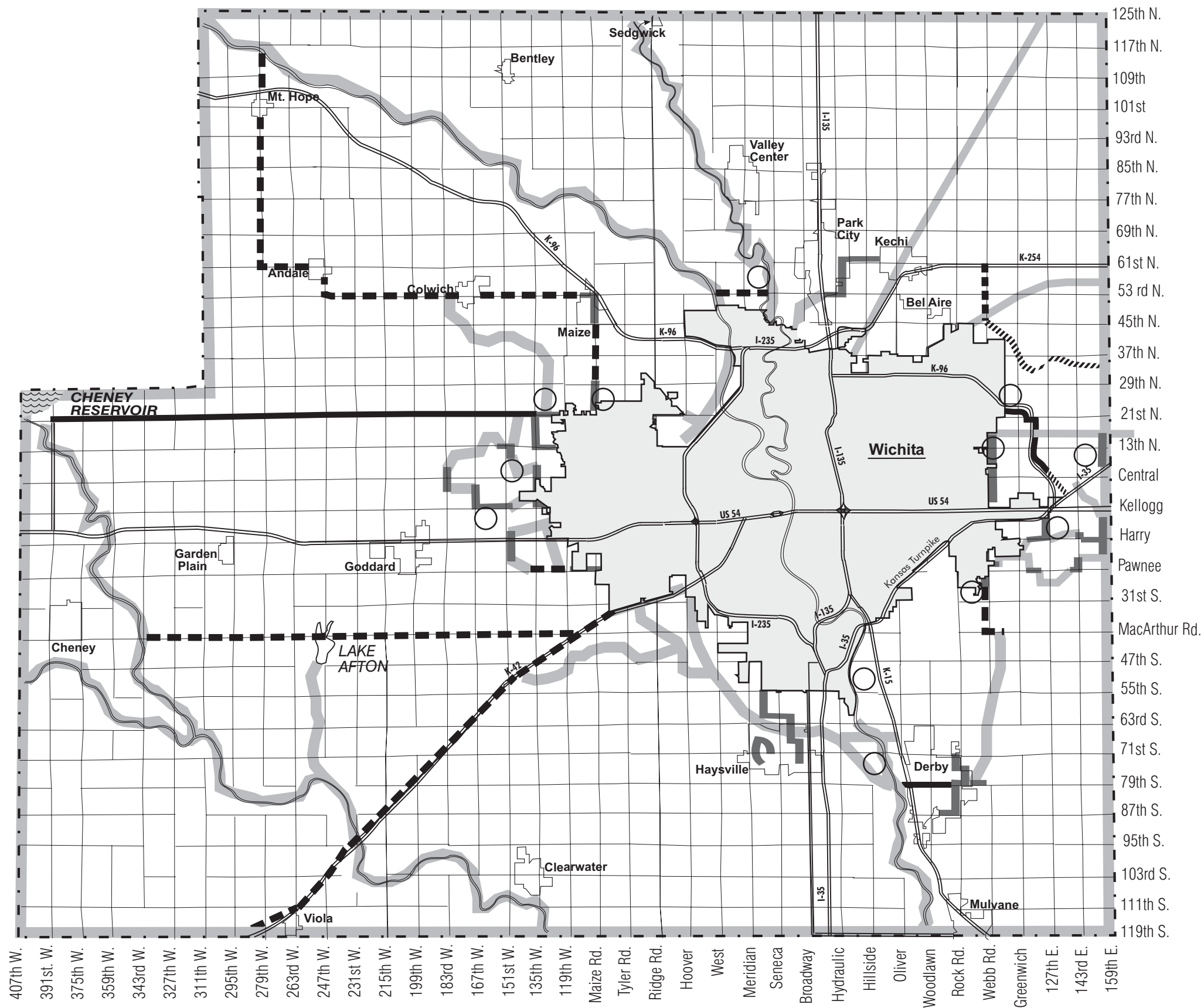


Figure 8

## Sedgwick County Pathways

### Legend

**Existing Pathways**  
(Recreation Corridors)

**Proposed Pathways:**

Greenway

Parkway

Rural Arterial

Urban Arterial

Potential  
Future  
Park Sites

**Note:** Due to space limitations, this map does not show all on street bike routes. For these, please refer to the Wichita Bicycle Map.



ral features. Within Sedgwick County's urban growth areas, especially Wichita's west, east, and northeast peripheries, opportunities exist for pathway development along creeks and floodplains.

Future development in these areas should preserve existing natural features and low land areas, by incorporating them into subdivision design as public or private parks and pathways. To ensure adequate right-of-way for corridor pathways development in these areas as part of the subdivision approval process, the **Wichita-Sedgwick County** subdivision regulations should be amended to implement this objective.

In rural Sedgwick County, a limited number of pathways are targeted. These run primarily along rivers, streams, and arterial roadways. These areas are less threatened by urbanization. However, they should be monitored to ensure their preservation. The different types of pathways and priority for acquisition are shown on the Future System Map.

### Overland Park, Kansas Greenways

Overland Park, Kansas is a community that has shown strong support for developing a linear park system and linear corridors. In 1991, the city adopted its Greenway Linkages Guidelines plan. This plan is intended to create a series of linear greenways. The greenways are linked to one another and to public parks and facilities throughout southern Overland Park. The recreational uses provided by the **greenway** linkages are tied to a system of **bike/hiking** trails to connect existing and proposed public parks and facilities. The **Plan** also outlines extensive landscaping in open space areas and easements to be provided in conjunction with the **walks** and a **Parkway** planned along U.S. 69 Highway.

A key emphasis of Overland Park's Greenway Plan is the use of development standards for **greenway** and parkway design along several arterial roadways. The **Plan** sets guidelines for setbacks, landscaping, easements, and other amenities that are considered and incorporated in the site planning, platting, rezoning, and special use permit processes for new development along the identified arterials. The plan calls for land identified for **greenway** development to be dedicated to the City through the preliminary site plan as a permanent easement or by fee simple title at the time of final plat or **final** development plan approval. Once the City acquires the land, it is responsible for designing and constructing the **trails** and landscaping plans, as well as maintaining the system once it is complete.

### Lincoln, Nebraska Trails Plan

As a part of its linear park system, Lincoln, Nebraska has developed a citywide trail system. Segments of this system have won national awards for urban design and inner city reuse projects. Due to the popularity of the city's trail system, the City updated and adopted the Lincoln Area Trails Master Plan. This plan serves as a guide for new trail development in Lincoln and Lancaster County and for an expanded network between the Lincoln and Omaha metropolitan areas. In Lincoln, the City also organized a Recreational Trails Advisory Committee whose members are appointed by the City's mayor. In addition, private citizen trail groups have been organized to lobby and conduct fund raising efforts for new trail facilities. The result of all the efforts conducted by both public and private cooperation has provided direct physical, economic, and social benefits to the region, according to local planners.

The Trails Master Plan ties the City's existing 60 miles of trails together with 80 miles of proposed trails that will create a city-wide network to serve walkers, joggers, runners, bicyclists and other users. The plan emphasizes improvements that connect high activity centers, improve public safety, and promote a better environment by encouraging energy savings. The City's trail system is based on a wheel and spoke system comprised of a primary circular system with the remaining urban area served by spokes leading to the central core. When all segments are complete, the Lincoln City/Lancaster County Planning Department estimates that 99 percent of the City's population will reside within one mile of a **trailway**.

Funding for the trail system is obtained from a wide range of sources, including the City's general fund, state and federal grant programs, CDBG funds, private and business donations, and local bond issues. Annual general fund appropriations for trail development and right-of-way acquisition are approximately \$100,000 in the Parks and Recreation Department and \$50,000 in the Public Works Department, with other funding sources used whenever possible. In 1989, a citywide multimillion dollar bond issue for trail development projects was supported by 77 percent of the voters.

### IMPLEMENTATION COSTS

The following descriptions illustrate **generalized** costs associated with park land acquisition, facility development, and maintenance. Cost estimates are based on the implementation of this plan by 2010 as shown in the future system maps for Wichita-Sedgwick County. These

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costs do not include necessary capital projects (such as maintenance and improvements to existing parks) currently in Wichita and Sedgwick County's capital improvement programs and other modifications and requirements resulting from the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

### **Land Acquisition Costs**

Land costs in Wichita and Sedgwick County vary greatly depending on location and other external market and site factors. Land located in developing or developed areas is generally more costly to acquire than undeveloped land in rural areas of the County. To illustrate this point, Table 26 shows recent Wichita Park Department land acquisitions in developing areas of west Wichita, and the valuation differences between land purchased in developed areas versus undeveloped land on the urban fringe.

As the table reveals, the City of Wichita paid \$16,000 per acre to acquire land for the Bella Vista neighborhood park in a developed area. The park purchase price was at market value for planned land in an area in need of a neighborhood park. Had the land for this park been acquired prior to development, or dedicated to the City through the subdivision process, a savings may have been achieved of up to \$40,000 on this park purchase alone.

However, as illustrated by the purchase price for the Meadows Park, located approximately 2 miles south of the Bella Vista Park, land located in a less developed portion of Wichita's urban fringe is generally less expensive. The cost of acquiring this land was approximately \$3,800 per acre. Although the Meadows Park is partially located within a flood plain, the lower land costs are generally attributed to the undeveloped nature of the site since other similar sites nearby (also located in the flood plain) have been developed for residential purposes.

Table 27 illustrates Year 2010 park, open space and

pathway land needs for Wichita, based on the standard of 15 acres/1,000 persons. The table shows an overall deficit of 68 acres for parks, pathways, and open space. However, this is due to the disproportionate amount of land in the regional park category. The needs for playgrounds, neighborhood and community parks are still substantial as evidenced by Table 16 earlier in the report (p. 32). The need for more sites to accommodate facilities that are in demand but currently limited, such as ball fields, walking trails and child play area, also exists. The table suggests that an additional 399 acres of public pathways and open space be acquired and be in place by 2010 in Wichita and the surrounding area. Based on an average corridor width of 25 feet, approximately 132,000 square feet (or 3.0 acres) comprise 1 mile of pathway.

If the Year 2010 needs are computed for the metropolitan area and not just for the City of Wichita alone, then a different picture emerges. The city's park system does draw from throughout the county and even from adjoining counties. If the metropolitan area is defined as Sedgwick County with a Year 2010 population projection of 460,866 (from Table 2 earlier), then the future park and pathway/open space needs are 1,076 acres for parks and 965 acres for open space for a total deficit of 2,041 acres. This comparison is shown in Table 28.

Given the land acquisition needs cited above, costs were then estimated based on the following assumptions:

- A proactive approach of land acquisition will be pursued in the future; land will be acquired in advance of development in the unincorporated urban fringe and rural areas of the county. Land costs in unincorporated areas were estimated to be lower than in developed areas. Without a proactive approach, all land acquisitions would be at higher urban land valuations.

- In Wichita, the majority of the park acreage needs for the Year 2010 will be located in the urban area. For

**Table 26**  
**RECENT PARK LAND ACQUISITION COSTS**  
(For Platted and Unplatted Land)

Park	Location	Acres Purchased	Cost per Acre
Bella Vista Park	NW Wichita: Urbanized Area	2.5	\$16,000
The Meadows Park	West Wichita: Undeveloped Area	96.4	\$3,800

Source: Wichita Park Department

Table 27  
YEAR 2010 WICHITA ALL PARK, OPEN SPACE AND PATHWAY LAND ACREAGE NEEDS

(a)	(b) Standard (Acres <sup>1</sup> 1000)	(c) Existing Acreage <sup>1</sup> Miles	(d) Expected Year 2010 <sup>1</sup> Demand (Based on Standards)	(e) Year 2010 <sup>2</sup> Need
Parks	11	4,128 <sup>3</sup> AC	3,797 AC	331
Pathways & Open Space	4	Pathways <sup>4</sup> 34 Mi or 103 AC	1,380 AC	-399 AC
		Open Space <sup>5</sup> 878 AC		
TOTAL	15	5,109 AC	5,177 AC	-68 AC

<sup>1</sup> Year 2010 Wichita population projection used is 345,162.

<sup>2</sup> Need (deficit) = Supply (column c) - Demand (column d).

<sup>3</sup> Acreage is from Table 14. includes Sedgwick County Park.

<sup>4</sup> Existing pathway mileage consists of 18 miles of existing bike paths, 11 miles committed to new bike paths and 5 miles of county bike paths, 1 bike path mile (25' x 5,280') is equivalent of 3.03 acres.

<sup>5</sup> The **open space** acreage is from Table 4 and includes: the riverbanks of the Big and Little Arkansas Rivers (637 ac.), **drainageways** (66 ac.), the Canal Route (130 ac.), public facilities (26 ac.) and other properties (19 ac.). Only acreage that is usable and accessible to the public was included from estimates provided by the Wichita Park Department. Approximately 6,400 acres of land comprising the Wichita-Valley Center **Floodway** has not been included. Some of this acreage, if and when available for public recreational use, will reduce the need for acquiring open space acreages.

the sake of cost estimation, land acreage for the City was valued at \$10,000 to \$15,000 per acre (for current urban platted land). The median value used in the computations was \$12,500. Pathway and open space land acreage was estimated at undeveloped (unincorporated **fringe** area) valuations of \$3,000 to \$5,000 per acre (median value used in computations was \$4,000).

• **Wichita** will implement use, development, and maintenance agreements with local school districts to utilize school playgrounds as public park facilities in areas with existing park deficits. While playground land would remain under school district ownership, the City (or Sedgwick County in some instances) could contribute to facility development (i.e., playground equipment) where necessary thus encouraging after hours use of the playground as a public park. As of 1993, it is estimated that approximately 150 acres of school owned playground land is located in targeted park deficit areas.

Table 28 illustrates estimated land acquisition costs through 2010. These values represent generalized current costs (for which extraneous market and site factors can be anticipated) and do not include an inflation factor.

Wichita's total Year 2010 land **acquisition** costs are anticipated to be approximately \$14,083,500 due to higher land values in urbanized or developing areas. These and future cost estimates will need to be closely monitored, however, about every two years, due to changes in land prices.

As discussed previously, implementation of land **dedication/fees-in-lieu** for new growth needs and agreements with school districts for use of school playgrounds in deficit areas can reduce public costs. Most of these reduced costs would be realized in and around Wichita since the majority of the County's residential development is projected for Wichita and its future urban growth areas. A hypothetical savings calculation attributed to such mechanisms is shown in Table 29. This is based on annual dedications of 20 acres for park and recreation corridor purposes in new growth areas and 10 acres from use agreements with local school districts in existing deficit areas.

There is also a need for an analytic **method** which recognizes the role of existing and future private recreational open space associated with residential development, and for procedures which guarantee the preservation

Table 28

ESTIMATED LAND ACQUISITION COSTS TO MEET WICHITA URBAN AREA EXISTING AND FUTURE NEEDS FOR ONLY TRADITIONAL PARKS FROM 1995-2010<sup>1</sup>

	Acres Needed <sup>2</sup> in Wichita in Year 2010	Acres Needed <sup>2</sup> in Metro Area in Year 2010	Cost Estimate Used	Wichita Cost Estimate	Metro Cost Estimate
Parks	999	1,076	\$12,500/A	\$12,487,500	\$13,450,000
Pathways & Open Space	399	965	\$4,000/A	\$1,596,000	\$3,860,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,398</b>	<b>2,041</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>\$14,083,500</b>	<b>\$17,310,000</b>

<sup>1</sup> Estimated in 1995 dollars.

<sup>2</sup> Includes current deficit needs.

<sup>3</sup> Price per acre is current and would need to be adjusted over time to reflect the cost of land in given locations.

<sup>4</sup> From Table 16; this table uses the deficits for playground, neighborhood and community parks rather than the net total which results when including regional parks.

Table 29

POTENTIAL LAND ACQUISITION COST SAVINGS DUE TO LAND DEDICATION AND AGREEMENTS WITH AREA SCHOOL DISTRICTS\*  
(Assuming 30 Acres Acquired Annually)

Cost Range	Annual Acquisition Cost Savings Due to Land Dedication <b>Low/High</b>		Annual Acquisition Cost Savings Due to Agreements with School Districts <b>Low/High</b>		TOTAL Acquisition Cost Savings <b>Low/High</b>	
<b>TOTAL</b>	\$172,000	\$250,000	\$100,000	\$150,000	<b>\$272,000</b>	<b>\$140,000</b>

\*Assuming 20 acres acquired through land dedication/fees-in-lieu and 10 acres from agreements with area school districts from 1995 to 2010.  
Estimated in 1995 dollars.

of that dedicated open space. Such a system of private reserves can have an impact on how public land needs are addressed and may help to reduce future costs of implementation to the general public.

## Facility Development Costs

As with land acquisition, costs for park facility development vary greatly due to site factors such as topography, soil conditions, park facilities, and material selection. Table 30 lists general facility development cost estimates to meet existing and new growth needs for traditional park facilities and pathways. These are based on a facility development cost ratio of **\$25,000/acre** as determined by past experience in Wichita and other communities in the county. These park development costs

are for typical recreation facilities, and equipment such as ball fields, courts, landscaping, irrigation, parking, and utilities. The table illustrates that nearly \$34 million must be invested in new park facilities to eliminate expected Year 2010 needs (excluding capital project costs for necessary improvements and ADA requirements in existing parks).

While the City or County do not need to develop intensive recreation facilities in every park, land should be acquired and developed with facilities as community demand and funding warrants. If necessary, park land can remain in its natural state until facility development is necessary. Future budgeting for facility development needs to recognize the large facility deficiencies indicated by standards. Also, initial implementation of the plan

**Table 30**  
**ESTIMATED FACILITY DEVELOPMENT COSTS TO MEET EXISTING AND NEW GROWTH NEEDS**  
**(At Minimum Standards - 1995 Dollars)**

Facility Type	Year 2010 Needs <sup>1</sup>	Facility Development Cost Ratio	Year 2010 Facility Development Cost
Traditional Parks	999 Acres	\$25,000/Acre	\$24,975,000
Pathways & Open Space	399 Acres	\$12,500/Acre <sup>2</sup>	\$4,987,500
Bike Paths	50 Miles <sup>3</sup>	\$80,000/Mile	\$4,000,000
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>\$33,962,500</b>

<sup>1</sup> From Table 28

<sup>2</sup> Cost shown is primarily for minimally developed open space and paths and is 1/2 of that for developed parks.

<sup>3</sup> Assuming 100% developed as paved trails (\$80,000/mile); 50 miles of bicycle trails is equivalent to 150 acres

should prioritize facilities which were identified by survey respondents as being important (i.e., neighborhood park facilities and trails). Furthermore, a regular, on-going comprehensive park and recreation survey should be conducted. This would help determine actual facility needs throughout Sedgwick County, the appropriate level of facility development, and the corresponding budget requirements for facility development.

### Maintenance Costs

Additional parks and recreation facilities mean more resources for maintenance activities in the future. As of 1994, the Wichita Park Department's annual maintenance

budget was slightly more than \$4.3 million, or about 36 percent of the total Department budget. Using recent Park Board maintenance contracts of record, maintenance costs for parks are estimated at \$264 an acre per year for parks with minimal facilities, such as nature parks, to \$623 an acre per year for highly developed parks with numerous facilities, such as tennis courts, ball fields, and restrooms.

Table 31 illustrates the potential personnel maintenance contract costs estimated for Wichita through Year 2010, based on 1993 park maintenance costs. Because maintenance is an **annual** operational cost, the estimates in Table 31 are by year with inflation factors not included.

**Table 31**  
**ANNUAL PERSONNEL MAINTENANCE COST INCREASE ATTRIBUTED TO NEW PARKS**  
**AND RECREATION FACILITIES**  
**(At Minimum Maintenance Levels - 1993 Dollars)**

Park Type	Annual Acreage to Acquire	Increased Personnel Maintenance Cost per Year	Total Cost 1995-2010
Pathways & Open Space <sup>1</sup>	26.6	\$12,752	\$1,530,245
Traditional/Local <sup>2</sup>	66.6	\$31,928	\$3,831,365
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>93.2</b>	<b>\$44,680</b>	<b>\$5,361.61 0</b>

<sup>1</sup> 20 percent calculated at \$623/ac for fully developed parks (new regional park) and 80 percent calculated at \$264/ac for parks with minimal facilities (pathways).

60 percent calculated for fully developed parks (traditional parks) and 40 percent for parks (pathways) with minimal facilities.

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The table illustrates anticipated annual personnel maintenance costs in 1993 dollars at minimum levels based on land acquisitions of 70 acres for traditional parks and 25 acres per year for open space and pathways. Overall, personnel maintenance costs are projected to increase by approximately \$45,000 annually. Because of the increase, it will be necessary to find revenues to cover these costs, in addition to other miscellaneous maintenance costs, necessary equipment purchases, and capital projects associated with park facility maintenance and repair. The total amount for the 15 year period to Year 2010 is estimated around \$5,361,610.

### Total Costs

Table 32 summarizes total estimated, additional expenditures in current dollars for land acquisition, new facility development, and for maintenance workers. These costs would be new costs in addition to current expenditures. Operating costs can be expected to increase slowly for Wichita after 1996, based on the gradual increase in park land inventory as described in the previous section on maintenance.

This ambitious park plan, which also addresses existing park deficits, suggests that there is a need to in-

crease revenues and implement strategies specifically dedicated toward park land acquisition, facility development, and maintenance and security. It is imperative that the plan be followed with a detailed financial plan to determine the specific revenues to be used to make the necessary improvements.

It will be necessary to direct more resources to Wichita-Sedgwick County's park system than in the past if the vision of this plan is to be achieved. While it is true that the general public tends to resist increasing taxes, the citizenry is more likely to support tax increases when devoted to specific activities with a direct and visible benefit and when assured of receiving a quality service/facility. Therefore, in order to gain public support for additional revenues, it is critical that the intended use of the revenue be clearly defined for the public. It is recommended that if any new revenue generators are implemented, they should be devoted to the following:

- 3 large (regional) parks;
- Additional recreation facilities and parks in deficit areas;
- Maintenance and security improvements.

### CONCLUSION

The plan is very basic in its vision for the future. It calls for four key actions to be taken. Interwoven with these are the goals, objectives and strategies. The four recommended actions are:

1) The establishment of service standards. In addition to a standard of 15 acres of park land per 1,000 residents in Wichita, there should be greater sharing and pooling of recreation resources between the Wichita Park Department and area school districts to leverage public resources. Furthermore, partnerships with developers of residential subdivisions should be encouraged to help meet the demands for new neighborhood parks.

2) The development of new revenue sources. A financial plan is called for to develop the appropriate mix of funding sources to implement the plan. This plan has laid the foundation and reasoning for such a mix. Now, it is time for the Wichita Park Board to move another step forward with the detailed financial assessment.

3) Expansion of Sedgwick County's role in park services. Because recreational interests and natural features are not restricted by political boundaries, there are many users of Wichita's park system and of area nature sites. One must realize that cooperation among Wichita,

Table 32

#### SUMMARY OF ESTIMATED YEAR 2010 LAND ACQUISITION, FACILITY DEVELOPMENT AND PERSONNEL MAINTENANCE COSTS

Total Costs	
Capital Improvements Program	
Land Acquisition	\$14,083,500 <sup>1</sup>
Facility Dev. in New Parks	\$33,962,500 <sup>2</sup>
SUBTOTAL	\$48,046,000
Operating Fund	
Personnel Maint. Costs	\$5,361,610
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>\$53,407,610</b>

<sup>1</sup> From Table 28, the sum of current and new growth needs for Wichita.

<sup>2</sup> From Table 30, total for Year 2010.

Sedgwick County, the small cities, the state, etc., are all necessary, to provide regional recreational services in south central Kansas. The approach used here starts with Wichita but is, in reality, county-wide.

4) The establishment of a pathway and open space system. An open space component is necessary to complement the active recreation areas. The open space consists of linear parks, pathway, greenways, urban beautification and landscaping.

After reviewing the costs associated with implementing this plan, the questions arises: Can we afford to carry out such a vision? The answer is yes if we make up our

minds to dedicate ourselves to the task. The companion question: Can we afford not to carry out the vision? Brings up the vision of a less attractive future with lowered standards of living and less recreational opportunities for our young, our middle-aged and our seniors. Wichita and Sedgwick County would just become less attractive places in which to live.

Wichita-Sedgwick County has an opportunity to implement a bold plan, over the next 15 years. The issue of funding should not be a stumbling block to pursuing the vision of this plan. Instead, the issue should be how to find the money. The plan has proposed the vision; now the financing must be identified.







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## APPENDIX A

### WICHTA PARKS (as of January 1, 1996)

#### PLAYGROUNDS

Barrington (W) <sup>1</sup>	0.68	7618 Barrington Circle
Ernporia (C)	1.09	11th & Ernporia
Glenn Village (C)	1.00	Hiram between Anita & Greenfield
Hope Park (C)	0.10	14th & Ernporia
Otis-Prospect Parks (C)	0.54	13th & Market/Main
Piatt (C)	1.45	20th & Piatt
Spruce (C)	0.77	12th & Spruce
<b>TOTAL (7)</b>	<b>5.63</b>	

#### NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS

<b>Bella Vista</b> (W)	2.40 (U)	11512 <b>Bella Vista</b>
<b>Claude Lambe</b> (Williamsburg) (C)	11.39 (U)	5115 E. 13th
Columbine (C)	10.33	Halstead & Columbine
Country Acres (W)	2.10	Country Acres & Hale
Cypress (C)	11.33	English & Edgemoor
Friendship (Hilltop Manor) (C)	11.98	1329 S. Terrace
Harvest (W)	9.34	<b>Westlink</b> & Provincial
<b>Henry</b> (C)	2.00	<b>Bayley</b> & Ellis
Hyde Park (C)	2.41	201 S. Greenwood
<b>Kiwanis</b> (C)	6.77	5101 W. 2nd
Meridian Park (C)	8.10 (U)	21st & Meridian
Lincoln (C)	3.00	<b>Bayley</b> & Broadway
<b>Minisa</b> (C)	9.60	704 W. 13th
Murdock (C)	9.89	Murdock & Minnesota
Palisade (S)	4.99 (U)	2392 Palisade Ave.
<b>Redbarn</b> (W)	8.18	9th & <b>Redbarn</b>
<b>Redbud</b> (NE)	7.30	17th & Edgemoor
<b>Riveria</b> (C)	2.00	Schweiter between <b>Menlo</b> & Rivera
Schell (C)	8.00	24th & Woodland
Schweiter (C)	9.00	Hillside & Lincoln
Seneca (C)	2.00	Texas & Seneca
Sleepy Hollow (C)	7.64	<b>Rutan</b> & Edgemont
Sunset (W)	19.37	17th & Keith
Sycamore (C)	12.89	15th & Westridge
Towne Park (S)	4.34	W. of W. Parkway
West Meadows (W)	1.50	1433 <b>Parkridge</b>
West Millbrook (W)	25.60	119th W. & Taft
<b>Westlink</b> (W)	3.50	Caddy Ln. & Delano
Woodland - North (C)	20.00	21st & Little Arkansas River
Woodland - South (C)	7.00	19th & <b>Heiserman</b>
<b>TOTAL (30)</b>	<b>243.95</b>	

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## COMMUNITY PARKS

Aley (C)	18.90	1803 S. Seneca
Boston (C)	17.50	Boston & Woodlawn
Browthrush (W)	44.62	Second & Brownthrush
Buffalo (W)	38.17	Maize & Hardtner
Cessna (C)	40.00	Mt. Vernon & Kansas Turnpike
College Hill (C)	22.00	Clifton & Lewis
Cottonwood (C)	21.00 (U)	Turnpike, Gouverneur & Harry
Eastview (NE)	19.98	1544 N. Gouverneur
Edgemoor (C)	25.53	9th & Edgemoor
Emery (S)	30.30	S. of MacArthur, W. of Turnpike
Evergreen (C)	27.28	2700 N. Woodland
Fairmount (NE)	19.00	1647 N. Yale
Grove (C)	125.85	27th & Grove
Harrison (E)	40.15	Webb Rd. N. of Harry
Herman Hill (C)	33.00	Broadway & Pawnee
Linwood (C)	65.40	Harry & Kansas
Lynette Woodard/Atwater (C)	3.05	2750 E. 18th
McAdams (C)	57.46	1329 E. 16th
Meadows (W)	96.38 (U)	Maple & 119th W.
Orchard (C)	19.82	4808 W. 9th
Osage (S)	20.00	2121 W. 31st S.
Southview (S)	20.00	W. of Seneca, S. of MacArthur
West Douglas (C)	16.77	Douglas Ave. & Sheridan
<b>TOTAL (23)</b>	<b>822.16</b>	

## REGIONAL PARKS

Chisholm Creek (NE)	281.90	N. of 29th, E. of Oliver
Oak Park/Riverside Complex <sup>2</sup> (C)	155.50	Along Big & Little Arkansas Rivers, Central to 13th
Pawnee Prairie (W)	624.49	Tyler Rd., S. of Harry
Planeview <sup>2</sup> (C)	116.39	116.39 W. of Oliver, N. of 31st S.
Sim <sup>2</sup> (C)	181.48	Murdock & Amidon
South Lakes (S)	247.29 (U)	W. of Seneca, N. of 55th St. S.
Watson <sup>2</sup> (C)	119.00	3055 S. Old Lawrence Rd.
<b>TOTAL (7)</b>	<b>1726.05</b>	

## SPECIAL USE PARKS AND GREENWAYS

A. Price Woodard Jr. Memorial Park (C)	4.21	Big Arkansas River, S. of Douglas
Air Capital Memorial Park (W)	9.55	S. of U.S. 54, W. of Tyler
Big Arkansas River Park <sup>3</sup> (C)	2.08	Arkansas River & 21st N.
Brooks Tract (Landfill) (W)	272.10 (U)	45th N. & West
Chisholm Greenway <sup>3</sup> (W)	10.00	Between Grove & Chisholm Creek Parks

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Cowskin Greenway <sup>1</sup> (W)		Near Maize from Central to Maple
-Bogue Property	2.75	
-Dillon Property	4.01	
-J. W. Russell Donation	5.80	
-Odgen Dedication	7.70	
-Rolling Hills Property	3.90	
-Weigand Property	2.90	
Finlay Ross Park (C)	0.50	E. of Water, S. of Douglas
Hellers Park <sup>1</sup> (N)	32.00	4401 Arkansas
Heritage Square Park (C)	0.45	115.E. William
Indian Hills Tract (C)	3.20	S of 13th, W. of Big Arkansas River
L.W. Clapp, Memorial Park (C)	94.70	Harry & Oliver
MacDonald Park (C)	148.58	840 N. Yale
Martin School	---- <sup>4</sup>	Richmond and 27th St. South
Mayor's Pine Grove (C)	0.77	2nd, Water & Wichita
McKnight Parkway (C)	4.49	McKnight & Hydraulic
Mead Island <sup>1</sup> (C)	5.00	Little Arkansas River, S. of 13th
Naftzger Memorial Park (C)	0.88	Douglas & St. Francis
Park Maintenance Facility (C)	3.24	1245 S. McLean
Veteran's Memorial Park	3.50	2nd & Greenway
S. Ark. River Greenway <sup>1</sup> (S)	103.10 (U)	71st. St. S. & Big Arkansas
Swanson Park <sup>1</sup> (W)	93.22	9th & Maize
Skyline Park (C)	[.42] <sup>5</sup>	Orme & Laura
Victoria Park (C)	0.37	17th & Park Place
West Side Athletic Fields (C)	24.83	571 N.W. McLean Blvd.
Wichita Art Museum (C)	6.15	Stackman & Sims Drive
<b>TOTAL (25)</b>	<b>849.98</b>	
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>3647.77</b>	

<sup>1</sup>Letter in parenthesis following park name refers to subarea location of park.

<sup>2</sup>These regional parks also serve to meet community park needs.

<sup>3</sup>These refer to areas intended to be left natural and to greenways.

<sup>4</sup>Acreage for Martin is not included because it is not owned by the City of Wichita.

<sup>5</sup>Land for this park is not owned by the City of Wichita, but is used and maintained by the Park Department under a use agreement with the KDOT Secretary of Transportation.

U = Undeveloped

Source: The 1996 Wichita Park Department Listing of Facilities

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## APPENDIX B

### Calculations used in Table 27

1) The basic formula is:  $\frac{\text{ } \times \text{ }}{345,162 \text{ people}} = \frac{\underline{11 \text{ acres}}}{1,000 \text{ people}}$

Where:

11 acres/1,000 people is standard for playgrounds, neighborhood, community and regional parks, and

345,162 is projected Wichita population in Year 2010

$$\times = \frac{345,162 \text{ people} \times \underline{11 \text{ acres}}}{1,000 \text{ people}}$$

$$\times = 3,796.78 \text{ acres}$$

$$\times = 3,797 \text{ (Rounded up) acres needed in Year 2010}$$

2) For pathways and open space the procedure is similar with the formula used being:

$$\frac{\text{ } \times \text{ }}{345,162 \text{ people}} = \frac{\underline{4 \text{ acres}}}{1,000 \text{ people}}$$

$$\times = 1,380.64$$

$$\times = 1,380 \text{ acres (Rounded down)}$$

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## APPENDIX C

### MAPC/WICHITA PARK BOARD FINANCE COMMITTEE SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES AUGUST, 1995

#### PURPOSE

The joint MAPC/Wichita Park Board Finance Committee was formed as a result of the MAPC/Park Board Workshop held at Pawnee Prairie Park on September 17, 1994, seven months after the discussion draft of the Park and Open Space Plan was first released. The purpose of the committee was to develop recommendations for funding the plan. Several members cited a need to know more about the funding necessary and the potential revenue sources available to implement the plan.

The original membership of the committee included three members each from the MAPC and the Wichita Park Board. The members were: Jim Miner, Lany Ross and John Frye from the MAPC; and Marvin Fisher, Larry Consolver, and Steve Sink from the Park Board. For the MAPC, John Frye was replaced by George Sherman. Staff from both the WMAPD and the Park and Recreation Department assisted the committee.

#### EARLY MEETINGS

Weekly meetings of the group began October 19, 1994 through the end of that year. The main focus for discussions was identifying the various sources of funding that would be adequate, either collectively or individually, to provide funds for park land acquisition and development called for in the plan over a fifteen year period. The plan had estimated land acquisition costs over the fifteen years at between \$11.8 to \$18.5 million, with possible development costs estimated at approximately \$42 million.<sup>1</sup> Referencing the plan, staff presented information during these meeting about a variety of funding sources used in other communities, such as Johnson

County, Kansas where park acquisition and development costs are funded primarily through a separate mill levy authority.<sup>2</sup>

Because of their higher revenue potential, property taxes and the sales tax became the primary revenue sources explored. It was estimated that different revenue sources would raise the following revenues:<sup>3</sup>

- 118 cent sales tax increase (\$78,269,070)
- 1 mill levy increase county-wide (\$30,105,555)
- 1 mill levy increase in Wichita (\$22,687,200)
- Impact fees (\$8,817,000)
- Facility donations & grants (\$5,750,000)
- Land dedication & fees in lieu (\$3,240,000)
- Land donations & grants (\$2,484,000)
- School land contributions (\$1,620,000)

Knowing the Wichita community's concerns about increasing taxes, committee members called for additional input from the community.

#### PUBLIC MEETINGS TO SOLICIT RESIDENT AND BUSINESS COMMUNITY INPUT

On October 18, 1994, the Finance Committee held a public hearing to obtain reactions to the plan. The positive comments expressed praised the plan's scope, vision and inclusion of abundant information, including financial. Most of the negative comments revolved around the proposals for trails in outlying areas through or near established subdivisions, the use of impact fees and land exactions as revenue sources, and the use of drainageways and floodplains for public recreation purposes.

<sup>1</sup>These numbers are from Tables 29 and 31 of the February, 1994 version of the draft park plan and not from the current version being used (June, 1995). The information that was produced used certain major assumptions which no longer exist. For example, cost calculations assumed expanded County participation with park land acquisition, development and maintenance. The information was also based on the population and existing supply of land before being updated with 1994 and 1995 data in January/February of 1995. Finally, the cost estimates included a higher trail needs figure compared to that found in the current plan. For these and other methodological reasons, the information spreadsheets developed nearly a year ago are no longer reflective of the current plan.

<sup>2</sup>These figures are found in the table with the park standard of 15 acres and over a 15 year period.

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Returning to their regular committee meeting schedule, members heard from staff that fees would not bring in as much money as the committee had initially anticipated. This caused committee members to focus more on an increase in the mill levy and/or sales tax as preferred options for funding. But prior to endorsing either, or both, an additional public hearing was arranged to get reactions to any proposals for mill levy or sales tax increases.

Attendance at the November 17, 1994, meeting was not as large as expected. Many of the special business groups that were invited were not present. About half those present were from two west Wichita residential subdivisions which had been opposing recreational trails "in their backyards." People did speak to the funding issue and expressed opposition to tax increases. The Wichita Independent Business Association expressed opposition to fees and charges against businesses as a means of funding. The association also claimed sales tax increases would drive people to shop elsewhere.

Other comments revealed a desire by some of the people for more ball fields and recreation programs as well as facilities that were distributed throughout the city and not concentrated only in certain sections. Also, it was mentioned that funding was needed to assure proper maintenance for all existing and future facilities acquired and installed.

#### **JANUARY/FEBRUARY, 1995 REVISIONS TO THE PLAN**

Over the ensuing holiday period, the committee continued to meet with staff to sort out possible recommendations given the feedback received. The responses by the public at the meetings held and other personal feedback received by the subcommittee members showed the difficulty in arriving at a recommended funding package at this particular time. It was noted that, to have an acceptable funding package, a close working relationship with and input by the various public and business groups would be necessary. In addition, a well-prepared marketing program for any new proposal for taxes would be needed.

Because of the difficulty in getting all needed information on future finances (including the publicity campaign) within the original six month timetable, staff recommended adding a new strategy to the plan. This strategy would call for a more detailed financial plan to be prepared as soon as possible following the approval of the plan. This way, the plan (the overall vision and rec-

ommended actions) need not be delayed any longer while the details of funding were worked out.

During these months, committee members and staff had also been meeting with County Commissioners/staff. Through these meetings, they received further information of the County's interest to limit its role to providing large, region-serving parks for passive recreation. This expression, along with the fact that the base data (population and park land inventory) were already two years old, dictated an update to the plan.

In January, 1995, a revised version of the plan was released. The following month, a reprinting of the plan was made with a few minor wording and chart footnote errors corrected. This was dated February, 1995. The two versions of the plan were essentially the same, however.

#### **FEBRUARY JOINT WORKSHOP AT HYDE PARK: THE SHIFT TO PARTNERSHIPS**

In February of this year, another MAPC/Wichita Park Board workshop was held. The purpose of this session was to review the latest revisions to the plan and come to an agreement, if possible, on the wording of the plan.

During the course of the meeting, discussion was held about occasional contributions of park land, and even improvements, made by developers. There was also discussion about the private parks included in some subdivisions. These were said to enhance the subdivisions and, although private, provide some neighborhood-scale facilities for their residents. These would be improvements the Park Department did not have to provide. The Finance Committee was asked to explore in greater depth the viability of using more "public-private partnerships" to provide park land and facilities at less cost to the City. The committee was asked to bring in some developers and get their input and cooperation in using this technique.

#### **FINANCE COMMITTEE AND DEVELOPERS WORK OUT AN ARRANGEMENT**

The next round of committee meetings with developer participation began on February 10, 1995. Several developers were invited to all subsequent meetings. Wichita Area Builders Association (WABA) later joined the group and distributed information about the results of the meetings to other developers. Other MAPC/Park Board members also attended on occasion.

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In preparation for these meetings, staff and WABA prepared separate reports describing partnership concepts and expectations. Committee members directed staff to merge the two papers into a single report.

After some fine tuning, this single report became the tool which the subcommittee members would use in future discussions with the city and county managers and any elected officials. It was deemed crucial to have, at least a preliminary sign-off by the managers' offices as to the feasibility of the partnership ideas presented.

In simple terms, the partnerships refer to situations whereby developers would receive some incentive in return for land donations for public parks. This could be lowered permit fees or guarantees of certain levels of improvement or maintenance by the City, for example. Developers could also opt to set aside land for a private park, or set aside no land, but pay a fee instead.<sup>4</sup>

The "joint paper" was presented to both managers who gave some suggestions for slight modifications. At the same time, there was general agreement that the ideas were worth implementing. Many partnerships will be case by case situations where the exact arrangement details will not be known in advance.

As a result of the jointly-worked out concepts, new language was offered for the plan to reflect public-private partnerships. This language was added to the June, 1995 version of the plan that was used in the final August, 1995 public hearing and joint workshop.

The different types of partnerships are described in greater detail in a report entitled, *Public-Private Partnerships to Help Meet Neighborhood Park Needs*. While describing different types of arrangements, the report does not limit the partnerships to these alone.

## CONCLUSIONS OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE

The Finance Committee reviewed various financial data regarding costs and possible revenues. It also received verbal and written testimony from some Wichita area residents and businesses. The people that spoke before the committee were too few to be considered fully representative of the feelings of the entire community. Nevertheless, there were some important considerations raised. In the end, the conclusions of the committee can be summarized in six simple statements. These are:

1. Public-private partnerships should be used more; the mechanics to use them need to be in place,
2. A financial plan will need to be developed with the involvement of representative groups of the public and business communities,
3. Sales taxes and property taxes will need to be looked at carefully for future funding,
4. Impact fees will not generate enough revenue to pay for the future improvements envisioned,
5. Partnerships will only provide limited subdivision, neighborhood-scale parks; reliable funding for larger parks and for existing, older parks is still needed?
6. A Finance Committee needs to continue to exist to investigate financing on an ongoing basis.